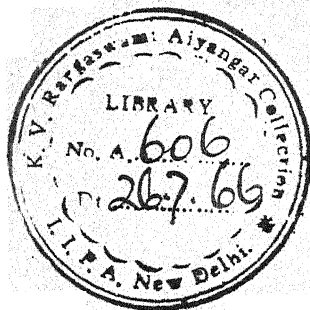


THE HISTORY
OF
EDWARD THE THIRD
(1327-1377).

BY
JAMES MACKINNON, Ph.D.



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TO
MY FATHER,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE.

PREFACE.

IN writing this work I have limited myself to the investigation of contemporary evidence. This evidence is composed, primarily, of official documents, and, secondarily, of the chronicles of the period. I shall not attempt to give in this preface a list of the works embraced in this two-fold category. I have done so most amply in the footnotes as I went along, and to these I would direct the critical reader. In view of the proofs adduced in these notes of the laborious investigation of sources, I shall be disappointed if the critic does not agree with me that the work may claim to be an independent contribution to the history of Edward III. I think I may hope, at all events, that if he forms an opinion on this matter different from mine, he will not be able to deny me the merit of a conscientious study of the materials bearing on this important period of English history.

The history of Edward III. required to be written. The issue, under capable editorship, of the chronicles of the fourteenth century, which has been proceeding during the last fifty years, affords the historian of this period a great advantage over his predecessors in respect of absolutely trustworthy texts. The publications of the Record Commission, for instance, leave nothing to be desired, and to

the many erudite scholars, who have done this part of the work of the Commission so admirably, I owe great obligations. Similarly, I take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to the editorial labours of scholars like Baron de Lettenhove and M. Luce, who have made every historian of the fourteenth century their debtors by their magnificent editions of the *Chroniques* of Froissart. It may be said, indeed, that by their publication of the original texts of the great fourteenth-century chronicler, they have re-created Froissart. Their editions have entirely superseded that of M. Buchon, to which writers on Edward III. have hitherto been indebted for so large a portion of their information. That part of the following narrative which has been drawn from the original Froissart, as thus discovered and set forth with monumental erudition, will therefore be found to differ in many important particulars from previous histories. I have likewise to confess myself a debtor to the comparatively recent editions of many other important chronicles of the period, such as those contained in the series of the Maitland Club, of the *Historians of Scotland*, of the *Chroniques Belges inédites*, and of the *Société de l'Histoire de France*. I have, as I have said, made mention in the notes of these obligations, and only do so in general here in order to show that this work is based on the study of new or improved sources, not hitherto used by the historian of Edward III. I have, besides, myself subjected these fourteenth-century annalists to a critical comparison with official documents, and have thereby aided, to some extent, in the task of correcting their numerous errors.

Froissart especially must be cross-examined at every step, even if he must be admitted to be our main guide to the military history of the period. Happily, besides the collection of documents in Rhymer's *Fœdera*, which is not so complete as is to be desired, there are numerous letters written by Edward or his generals, and containing trustworthy, if succinct, data for this purpose. If the reader will, for example, compare the account given in this work of the battle of Poitiers with that of Froissart, he will observe that by the careful examination of the narratives of Baker de Swinbroke, Chandos Herald, and the French chroniclers, I have departed considerably from the conventional descriptions of previous historians.

The history of Edward III. is practically that of England for half a century, and embraces that of Scotland, France, the Low Countries, and Spain in a more limited degree. The work is, therefore, more than a biography; it is a history of an important and dramatic epoch, as influenced and overshadowed by the extraordinary man who was the motive power of the activity of his age. It is in this spirit that the book was conceived and executed, and while shunning no labour to obtain original information, I have striven to reproduce it in a style in keeping with the dramatic character of the subject.

The work is by no means an apology of its hero, as is the case with so many biographies. I have not looked at the history of the time from the standpoint of Edward III., though I have tried to do justice to this aspect of his life. I have sought to represent him as "others saw him," as his contemporaries, not only of his own country, but of

Scotland and France, regarded him and his actions, while I have at the same time made ample use of my own right of criticism—a right derived from the laborious, and, I trust, impartial investigation of the history of the time. If the result shall be to contribute to the knowledge of the man and his age, and, in however small a degree, to the edification of the reader, I shall be satisfied.

In following the numerous campaigns of the period, I recommend readers to consult the excellent maps of Europe (No. 7), Scotland (No. 25), France (No. 56), The Empire and the Low Countries (No. 36), in the Fourteenth Century in the Historical Atlas of Modern Europe, edited by Reginald Lane Poole, particularly Nos. 56 and 36.

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THE HISTORY OF EDWARD III.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—THE REIGN OF EDWARD II.

A MORE complete ninny than Edward II. has seldom occupied a throne. He was indeed a man of commanding presence—tall, strongly built, and very handsome¹—but his kingly figure was not yoked with a kingly intellect or will. He had no taste and no capacity for kingship, except in the mere matter of military parade and Court ceremony. He preferred to ride a horse, row a boat, “dig a pit or thatch a barn,” get up masques, and patronise playwrights, try his hand at farming and horse-breeding, to the work of government.² As recreations these pursuits might do credit to a great ruler, but when they are the chief occupations of a monarch who cannot rule, they betoken the trifler and the pitiful incapable. He was never anything but a nominal sovereign, for the exercise of power oscillated between self-seeking favourites, on the

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, Auctore Malmesberiensi, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and Edward II.*, edited by William Stubbs, ii. 192.

² *Gesta Ed. Car.* Auctore Brid., *ibid.*, ii. 91.

one hand, and the factious leaders of the barons, on the other, who were powerful enough to oust for a time the parasites of his Court. Gaveston in the beginning of his reign, the Despensers in the latter part of it, were the real rulers, while in the interval Thomas Earl of Lancaster, Edward's cousin, and his turbulent adherents, Hereford, Warwick, and others, disputed, and at times successfully disputed, the possession of the government.

His reign accordingly stands out as a period of ceaseless friction, chronic rebellion, and persistent misgovernment—a period of chaos wedged in between the strong and brilliant regime of his father, Edward I., and the equally strong if less brilliant regime of his son, Edward III. Curious that so weak a king should have had so powerful a ruler for his progenitor, and in his turn have left an heir so unlike himself as the martial and imperious Edward III. Hereditary succession has produced some strange freaks for the philosopher to account for, and the nations have only too often had to pay a heavy price for the advantages of its observance.

To England the sacrifice for the privilege of being ruled by such a hopeless creature as the second Edward was indeed a very terrible one. His reign was as fruitful of defeat and disgrace at the hands of external enemies as it was of internal weakness and disorder. The indomitable Scots gloriously vindicated their national independence, and drove their would-be conqueror more than once a fugitive across the Border. In the annals of English history there is no such crushing defeat on record as that inflicted by Robert Bruce at Bannockburn on Edward of Carnarvon. It was a

blow from which a spiritless king and a dispirited people could not recover in that generation, especially as the Scots followed it up by an unbroken series of successes. A wail of hopeless dejection rises from the chroniclers of the period, who seek to console themselves with the reminiscence of the great English kings of former times. "Oh, if our King Edward had comported himself as well as the great King Richard, had he not acquiesced in the counsel of evil men, there might have been none among his predecessors nobler than he. Had he given as much labour to the study of arms as he has bestowed on the art of agriculture, how would England have excelled, and its glory resounded throughout the world. What hopes centred around the Prince of Wales, and how did hope vanish when he became King of England! . . . Behold, he has reigned six full years, and not an action laudable or worthy of mention has he done for the land, except marry his royal person and procreate a dainty heir to the kingdom."³

No wonder that under such a king the State was ever hovering on the brink of rebellion and revolution. Feudalism boldly shook its mailclad fist at the throne, and became effusively democratic and domineering in its contempt for this shadow of a monarch. It is to the Crown, not the person of the king, that the subject owes obedience. The State, not the king, is supreme, and the subject has a right to compel him to govern for its interest.⁴

³ Vita Edwardi Secundi, Auct. Malm., pp. 191-192.

⁴ See Annales Londonienses de Tempore Edwardi Secundi, in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and Edward II., i. 153-154.

Sound political doctrine, no doubt, but in spite of this theoretic interest in the general welfare, there is hardly a vestige of public spirit discernible in the conduct of these turbulent barons and prelates. Nothing but rank selfishness and contentiousness, which are ever prone to efface their puppet king for their own purposes. Everywhere the lack of real patriotism, whether in matters of internal or external policy.

These barons and prelates forced the king in 1310 to accept their democratic theory of the State and sanction the appointment of Ordainers to carry out certain reform ordinances.⁵ The Ordainers drew up sundry regulations *pro bono publico* and for Edward's guidance under this joint-stock principle of government; but the experiment was nullified by the faction and self-seeking of these aristocratic patriots, whom the miserable king was powerless to control, and with whom he was unwilling to co-operate. Anarchy was the result; ultimate revolution inevitable. The only measure of practical utility which they succeeded in enforcing was a very tragic one. They compelled the king to proscribe Gaveston a second time, and when, shortly after, Edward recalled the detested favourite and restored his estates, Lancaster and his confederates rose in arms, tracked Gaveston down at Scarborough Castle, and patriotically deprived him of his head on Blakelowe Hill on the 19th June 1312, as "a subverter of the laws, and a traitor to the commonwealth."⁶

⁵ Annales Lond., pp. 168-170, 172-173, 198-202.

⁶ Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, edited by H. T. Riley, i. 133.

At length in 1322 there came a spurt of energy and strong government. This spurt originated with the Despensers, father and son. To their regime, drastic if selfish and oppressive, Lancaster and his associates were as hostile as they had been to that of the Gascon upstart.

In the previous year they had met in Parliament at London to give expression to their opposition to the strong personality of these unscrupulous favourites by a sentence of banishment, with forfeiture of goods.⁷ To escape the storm the elder Despenser went abroad, and his son set out on a piratic cruise in the Channel. Edward refused to sacrifice them, and Lancaster and his confederates rose in arms and marched to Burton-on-Trent. For once the poor king showed spirit enough to resent this forcible application of the claim of the Ordainers to make him the puppet of their patriotic, but factious political science, and being rejoined by the Despensers, marched northward from Coventry at the head of a large force. Lancaster retired at his approach, but his army was intercepted and totally defeated at Boroughbridge by Andrew de Harclay, the custodian of Carlisle, on the 16th March 1322. The Earl of Hereford was killed, and Lancaster taken prisoner, carried to Pomfret, and summarily condemned and executed.⁸

It looked as if this decisive victory over feudal

⁷ *Gesta Edwardi Terti, Auctore Bridlingtoniensi*, in *Chronicles of Edward I. and II.*, ii. 65-69; cf. *Vita Edwardi Secundi Auct. Malm.*, pp. 256-260.

⁸ *Walsingham*, i. 161-165; *Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum*, edited by E. M. Thompson, pp. 34-35; *Vita Ed. Sec., Auct. Malm.*, pp. 267-271.

turbulence, which, while professing patriotic and even democratic views, had tried to wield the government for its own interests, had preserved England from anarchy and revolution. This prospect was speedily belied by the tragic sequel. The truce for thirteen years, concluded with Robert Bruce, assured indeed immunity from those terrible Scottish invasions which had intensified the miseries of misgovernment and the angry contempt for the regime of an impotent sovereign. The vigilance and resource of the elder Despenser, now Earl of Winchester, and his son, the Earl of Gloucester, frustrated a second attempt by the barons to seize the government by force. But faction and conspiracy lurked in wait for their opportunity, and the opportunity was not long in coming. At this critical juncture Edward was unluckily involved in controversy with the French king over the question of homage for his possessions in France. It was in connection with the settlement of this question that Edward's queen, Isabella, a daughter of Philip IV. of France, and sister of the then reigning king, Charles IV., was sent over to Paris in 1325 to act as mediatrix between the two monarchs. Her departure on this diplomatic mission was the beginning of the end for the husband whom she detested, and whose fall she was determined to bring about. Ostensibly she played the part of a good queen and a good wife in the matter in question, for she succeeded in bringing the controversy to a satisfactory conclusion. Through her mediation it was arranged that Edward should confer his French possessions of Aquitaine and Ponthieu on his son, the boy Prince of Wales, and that Prince Edward should

do homage for them to Charles IV. The prince was accordingly sent over to join his mother, and publicly profess himself Charles' "man," as Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Ponthieu.

Isabella's diplomacy was probably actuated by the desire to get her son, on some plausible reason, across the Channel, in order the better to carry out the revolution against her husband on which she was resolved. Edward had soon bitter reason to curse the shortsightedness that led him into the snare. He had some thoughts of going over to do homage in person, but yielded to the advice of the Despencers, who were afraid of the consequences of his absence to themselves, and stayed at home. Isabella, who was joined by her paramour, Roger de Mortimer, and other disaffected nobles, now showed her hand. She refused to return in response to the repeated injunction of her husband.⁹ Edward punished her contumacy by proclaiming her and the prince and their adherents enemies to the State. It was a sorry spectacle, that of a runaway wife, living in open adultery with an expatriated nobleman, and plotting the overthrow of her luckless husband, and that husband a king! Still more shocking is it to find the nation, in its contempt for that king, evidently on the side of the runaway adulteress against the husband. A little vigour and resolution was all that was necessary to bring about a successful revolution, and the bold and unscrupulous Isabella was equal to the audacity of the attempt. From Paris she proceeded to the Court of Count William of Hainault at Valenciennes, in whom she found a willing abettor of her daring scheme. Their alliance

⁹ See Rymer's *Fœdera*, Record Edition, ii. 615, 622-623, 630.

was cemented by the betrothal of the young Edward, then a boy of fourteen, to the Count's daughter Philippa. A small fleet was got ready in the summer of 1326 to transport the force of nearly three thousand German and Hainault mercenaries and English exiles to England, and on the 24th September Isabella landed at Colvasse, near Harwich.¹⁰ With her were the Prince of Wales, the Earl of Kent, the king's brother, Roger de Mortimer, and John of Hainault, brother of the count. The sequel shows that she had rightly gauged the temper of the country. Her rapid and astonishing success demonstrates, too, in tragic fashion how little hold Edward had on the nation, and how little resource he had in himself and his ministers at this critical moment. It is all the more remarkable, inasmuch as nobody believed in the personal wrongs she laid to her miserable husband's charge. They were trumped up to serve personal and political ends, and deceived no one. Nevertheless the nation welcomed the adulterous queen with acclamation, and turned almost as one man against the ill-used but contemptible husband. Most of the bishops even—notably Burghersh of Lincoln, Orlton of Hereford, Stratford of Winchester, Ayermin of Norwich—espoused her cause, in spite of her *liaison* with Mortimer, and swelled her army with their retainers as she advanced towards Oxford.

Edward, who was at London, could not credit the report of her arrival. Its confirmation threw him into the greatest consternation. Evidently the country was against him, but might not the capital rally to his side? He appealed for help to the

¹⁰ Annales Paulini de Tempore Edwardi Secundi, in Chronicles of Edward I. and II., i. 313-314.

citizens of London, who returned an equivocal answer, hurriedly put the Tower in a state of defence, and issued a proclamation calling on his subjects to resist the invaders, and offering a reward of £1,000 for the capture of Mortimer, dead or alive.¹¹ He now discovered that neither he nor the Despensers could reckon on the support of a party among the middle class of the towns as against the barons, and on the 2nd October hurried away from London westwards into Gloucestershire with the intention of rallying the Welsh to his standard. His departure was the signal for the outbreak of revolution in the capital. On the 15th October the mob rose and compelled the mayor, Hamo de Chiqwell, an adherent of the king, to declare for the queen in order to save his life, and murdered John le Marchal, the familiar friend and secretary of the younger Despenser. It then stormed, plundered, and burned the house of Stapleton, the Bishop of Exeter, who had accompanied Isabella to France, and refused to countenance her adulterous connection with Mortimer. The bishop was absent at his country residence, and was returning to the city with no suspicion of danger, when he came upon the yelling mob in Cheapside. He rushed to seek a sanctuary in St Paul's, but was seized at the north door, beaten and wounded, dragged to Cheapside, and finally decapitated, along with two of his esquires, as a traitor, with a butcher's knife, his body being thrown into a hole among the ruins of the Church of the Holy Innocents. The mob completed the savage drama by taking possession of the Tower and liberating the prisoners. Other cities followed the example of the capital, and

¹¹ *Fœdera*, ii. 644.

restored the victims of the Despenser regime to liberty.

Meanwhile the queen had reached Oxford, where the Bishop of Hereford preached a sermon in her presence in vindication of an enterprise whose morality at least was very questionable. Bishops have sometimes had very elastic consciences, and his lordship of Hereford perorated with the utmost unction on the movement led by a shameless adulteress and her worthless paramour. At Wallingford, Isabella herself addressed the natives in a proclamation justifying the revolution by arraigning the misdeeds of the Despensers.¹² From Wallingford she moved on to Bristol, where the elder Despenser had halted to dispute her progress. His resolution cost him dear. No sooner did the queen appear on the 26th October than the citizens opened their gates. Despenser was taken and sentenced to be hanged as a robber¹³ without the right of a hearing. Hanged he forthwith was on the common gibbet, and his head exposed to public insult at Winchester, from which he took his title.

Isabella and her adherents now boldly set up the Prince of Wales as guardian of the kingdom,¹⁴ and continued their efforts to track down his father. The miserable king, abandoned by everybody except the younger Despenser, the Earl of Arundel, Robert Baldock, the Chancellor, and a few others, wandered about for another fortnight in Wales, vainly entreating help from the men of Gower, and vainly attempting to land on the island of Lundy. His fugitive course may be traced from Cardiff to Caerphilly, from

¹² *Fœdera*, ii. 645.

¹³ *Annales Paulini*, p. 317.

¹⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 646.

Caerphilly to Neath, and from Neath to Llantrissaint. The queen sent him a hypocritical message to return and resume the government, but the spiritless king had but too good reason not to trust himself in the hands of such a spouse, and continued to skulk among the Welsh hills. He was finally taken by Henry, Earl of Lancaster, at the castle of Llantrissaint, on the 16th November, in the midst of a wild storm of thunder, rain, and wind, and carried to Kenilworth. The younger Despenser, who was captured along with him, was hanged at Hereford, on the 24th, on a gibbet fifty feet high, and quartered, his head being stuck on London Bridge, while Arundel had already suffered execution at Shrewsbury on the 17th. Some months later Baldock succumbed to the ill-usage he received in Newgate Prison.¹⁵

In this truculent fashion did the barons return the blow received at Boroughbridge, and vindicate the principle that the king may be constrained to do right. The younger Despenser, who had enunciated it against Gaveston, could hardly complain of its application against himself. While some of the chroniclers commiserate the father, who, though a selfish, greedy man, had some title to a harsh integrity, the son receives no quarter as a scheming, tyrannical favourite, and England lost nothing in his execution. But in ridding the kingdom of the hated

¹⁵ Walsingham, i. 177-187; Murimuth, pp. 45-50; *Annales Paulini*, pp. 313-322; Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. Lettenhove, t. ii. 26-95; Thomas de la More, *Vita et Mors* Ed. Sec., in *Chronicles of Edward I. and II.*, pp. 306-312; *Scalachronica*, edited for the Maitland Club by Jos. Stevenson, pp. 150-152; *Chronicon de Lanercost* (Maitland Club), pp. 254-257.

Dispenser regime, the queen and her adherents had struck a mortal blow at Edward's authority. He was now impossible as king, and it only remained to consummate the revolution by his deposition. To this end Isabella summoned a Parliament to meet at London, where she was received with acclamation as the deliverer of the kingdom. The large number of magnates, lay and clerical, which responded to the summons on the 7th January 1327 again emphasised the fact that, however scandalous had been the conduct of the queen, the nation, in its reaction from the contemptible regime of Edward, was unanimous in its approval, scandal and all. Parliament, acting on the assumption that the sovereignty belongs to the people, found the six articles against Edward drawn up by Bishop Stratford proven, and declared that he had forfeited the crown by reason of his misgovernment, and transferred it to his son. The Archbishop of Canterbury sanctified the transaction by a sermon on the theme, "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," and in virtue of this popular warrant the crown was offered to a boy of fourteen. The English method of dealing with weak or recalcitrant kings has always been a drastic one, whether the opponents of the sovereign were turbulent, factious barons, or red-hot republicans. Edward was now to learn that in England at least good government is the only real title to the royal authority. The fable of the divine right of kings receives no quarter from these practical if rough and factious barons and prelates, and if their motives had been purer and their professions of respect for popular rights more sincere, no exception could be taken to their action in plucking the crown from the head of an incapable monarch. Their

action was popular at all events, for the wretched prisoner at Kenilworth had never won the love and had now forfeited the respect of his subjects. For decency's sake, Isabella made a hypocritical show of grief, and Prince Edward, with sincere hesitation, declined to receive the crown without the consent of his father. A deputation, headed by the Bishops of Winchester, Hereford, and Lincoln, was therefore despatched to Kenilworth to extort the resignation of the wretched king. The bishops preceded their fellow-commissioners to dispose him to compliance by the threat of putting the crown past his son, in case of refusal. Edward yielded to this crafty and cruel argument, and submissively performed the part dictated to him. When the other commissioners were introduced to witness the formal ceremony of renunciation, he fainted, and would have fallen on the floor, had not the Earl of Lancaster and the Bishop of Winchester caught him as he swooned away. When he regained consciousness, he abjectly delivered up the crown and sceptre—brought from London for the purpose—lamenting with tears and sobs that he had deserved so ill of his people, asking pardon for his demerits, and thanking them for selecting his son in his stead. Thereupon Sir William Trussel, the procurator, read a document formally renouncing the homage of the nation, and the high steward, Sir Thomas Blunt, broke his staff in token that Edward's authority had ceased.¹⁶

Edward as king was dead, but only his destruction could assure his false and shameless queen and her paramour against the fear lest the dethroned king

¹⁶ Vita et Mors Ed. Sec., pp. 313-314; Walsingham, i. 186-187; Murimuth, pp. 50-51.

might profit by a revulsion of popular feeling in his favour. Their factious adherents could not be trusted to remain staunch to their professions if their self-interest was crossed, and conspiracy was soon at work hatching a plot for Edward's restoration.¹⁷ From Kenilworth he was removed to Corfe Castle, thence to Briston, and thence to Berkeley, under the custody of John Mautravers and Thomas Gurney. The queen kept up the farce of writing kindly letters and sending him presents of fine clothing, but, at her instigation, he was treated by his keepers with brutal harshness and indignity. He was served with food that he loathed, kept from sleeping, exposed to cold, was once shaved with ditch-water seated on a mole-hill by the Severn, stuck on a horse with a crown of hay on his head, with the cruel jeer, "Fare forth, Sir King!", and constantly rated as fool and dotard. Even these sufferings would not kill him, and his keepers tried to hasten the process of dissolution by adding to his torments that of poisoning the air he breathed. They shut him up in a chamber in the tower of the castle whose atmosphere was poisoned by the effluvia of putrid carcasses. Even this device failed, and the Bishop of Hereford gave them a significant hint to make short shrift with their wretched captive.

"Kill Edward never fear 'tis good,"

was the equivocal distich from which they took their cue. On the 21st September Gurney and Mautravers suddenly changed their tone and tactics, gave Edward a good dinner and a good supper, and

¹⁷ Annales Paulini, p. 337 (June 1327).

put on every appearance of kindness. That night they stole into his room with some attendants, and murdered him with a revolting brutality which will hardly bear description. They threw a heavy table on the upper part of his body as he lay in bed, and with a red-hot spit perforated and lacerated his entrails, through the *anus*, amid the shrieks which were heard outside the stout walls, and bore into the midnight darkness the tidings of as revolting an outrage as black and savage murder ever contrived. His corpse was exposed to the people of Gloucester and Bristol as if death had been due to natural causes, but the flight of Mautravers and Gurney across the Channel to escape the possible consequences of their crime was only too well-founded evidence of foul play. Four years later, Edward III. caused Gurney to be arrested in Spain and sent to England to answer for his crime.¹⁸ Had he not died on the way home, it is probable that he would have incriminated persons of high rank of complicity in the vile deed. Certain it is that the murder of Edward was one of the charges for which Mortimer had already been brought to the block.¹⁹

The mystery of Edward's tragic end gave rise to a curious but incredible story of his changing clothes with his servant, of his escape to Ireland, his secret return to England and retirement to Lombardy, where he lived for several years as a hermit—all told with the circumstantial minuteness of the ro-

¹⁸ *Fœdera*, ii. 819, *et seq.*

¹⁹ For the accounts of Edward's imprisonment and murder, see More's *Vita et Mors Ed. Sec.*, pp. 315-319; Higden's *Polychronicon*, edited by Lumby, viii. 324-325; Walsingham, i. 188-189; Murimuth, pp. 52-54.

mancer, in order to screen the culpable parties from the guilt of a horrible outrage, or whitewash their odious memory.²⁰

²⁰ The story is told in a letter from Manuel Fieschi to Edward III. See Stubbs' Introduction to the Chronicles of Edward I. and Edward II., vol. ii., pp. civ.-cvi.

CHAPTER II.

SUPREMACY OF MORTIMER (1327-1330).

THE young king, who was crowned as Edward III. on the 1st February 1327,¹ was placed under the care of twelve guardians, of whom the Earl of Lancaster was the chief. Isabella and Mortimer ignored Lancaster, however, and practically wielded the sceptre during the next three years. The regime of favouritism was not more palatable under Mortimer than it had been under Gaveston and the Despencers, and for three years longer England was the prey of misgovernment and faction. Mortimer made himself so detested by his arrogance and his cupidity that he could not escape hanging whenever the young Edward should have the manhood to free himself from the domination of his mother and turn upon her paramour. The lad of fourteen was happily to show a precocity which would not long submit to this disgraceful thralldom, but during this short interregnum Mortimer did sufficient mischief to brand him as one of the worst of the many worthless politicians that lowered England to the degraded level of the reign of Edward II. His conciliatory policy towards Scotland was indeed wise, but there was an ugly charge of bribery adduced to explain

¹ *Fœdera*, ii. 648; *Walsingham*, i. 187; *Murimuth*, p. 51; Robert of Avesbury, *De Gestis Edwardi Tertii*, edited by E. M. Thompson, says (p. 283) erroneously the 25th January.

his compliance, and at any rate the recognition of Scottish independence in the treaty of Northampton was accounted unpatriotic and was intensely unpopular. This wound to the national pride lacerated beyond endurance the animosity produced by the rapacity and the insolence of his internal regime.

The question of the independence of Scotland was forced upon Isabella and Mortimer in the drastic form of a Scottish invasion. Since 1323, when Edward II. concluded a truce for thirteen years² with Robert Bruce, there had been a cessation of hostilities between the two countries. In the interval, *i.e.*, in 1326, Bruce had taken the precaution to revive³ with Charles IV. the Franco-Scottish Alliance concluded with Philip IV. in 1295. This league was directed against England, for England was the common enemy of France and Scotland. It bound both sovereigns to support each other in case of war by either with this common enemy, the Scots engaging specifically to invade England for the benefit of their allies when called upon to do so. Charles IV. had welcomed the overtures of Bruce all the more readily in view of his strained relations with Edward II. The settlement of the dispute as to Aquitaine obviated the necessity for a Scottish invasion of England on behalf of France. But the Scots had too many wrongs to avenge on England to resist the temptation to take

² *Fœdera*, ii. 521 (30th May).

³ John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation, edited by W. F. Skene, i. 350; The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland, by Andrew of Wyntoun, edited by David Laing, ii. 372. See Treaty in Memoirs of the Alliance between Scotland and France, pp. 4-13 (April 1326).

advantage of the advent of the boy king to force the recognition of their independence. Mortimer strove to soothe their bellicose temper by declaring Edward's adhesion to the truce of 1323, and resuming the negotiations for a final peace carried on by his father.⁴ But no permanent peace was possible without the full admission of Scotland's rights, and the persistent reference in English diplomatic papers to the Scottish king and his subjects as "Robert Bruce and his adherents" precluded the hope of this admission. The Scots accordingly determined to seize the opportunity to compel compliance. King Robert was already suffering from that fell disease which was ere long to bring him to his grave, and was too ill to take the field in person. The command of the expedition was therefore entrusted to Randolph, Earl of Moray, and Sir James Douglas,⁵ and a herald despatched to the English Court, in accordance with the usage of chivalry, to defy the young Edward.⁶ Edward accepted the challenge, and on the 5th April 1327 summoned the barons and their retainers to meet him in the following month at Newcastle.⁷ John of Hainault was commissioned to raise a mercenary force in the Low Countries, and joined the young king at York in June with his foreign contingent, in which were many famous knights from Hainault, Flanders, Brabant, Julich, Cambresis, and Artois—five hundred in all, including their esquires, in full armour, besides their numerous followers.⁸ In honour of their arrival Edward and his mother

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 696.

⁵ *Fordun*, i. 351.

⁶ *Froissart*, *Chroniques*, ii. 107-108. ⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 702.

⁸ *Froissart*, ii. 110-115; *Fœdera*, ii. 706.

gave a banquet in the hall of the Abbey of the Minor Friars. During the feast a dispute arose between some English archers and the followers of the foreign knights over a game of dice. From words the disputants came to blows, and the foreigners were compelled to seek refuge in the quarter of the city assigned as their lodging. There the fugitives rallied and drove back their pursuers. The tardy intervention of Thomas Wage, the marshal of the English army, put an end to the conflict, but not before a large number had been slain on both sides. This was a bad beginning of the campaign, for though Edward made all the amends in his power, the hatred between the English archers and their allies could only with difficulty be prevented from breaking out afresh in mutual slaughter.⁹

The English army loitered over a month at York, and it was not till the beginning of July that Edward resumed his march northwards. Meanwhile the Scots, 24,000 strong, had burst across the border. The knights and men-at-arms were mounted on large steeds, the bulk of the army on small hardy ponies. As usual in these raids, the invaders did not encumber themselves with baggage, but trusted to the resources of the country for maintenance. Each man carried a bag of oatmeal and a girdle to bake his oatcake, bag and girdle being slung on either side of the saddle. For the rest he took whatever he could get, roasting the oxen of the yeomen of Northumbria in their skins; and if at times there was nothing to forage, he could subsist with

⁹ Froissart, ii. 115-131.

the utmost content on his oatcake and a drink of water.¹⁰ Such an invader was a redoubtable enemy.

Mounted on his tough hackney, he could both move rapidly and cause great havoc over a large district in a short time. Edward had not marched far when he beheld in the smoking hamlets and farmsteads the grim effects of this rapid progress. He followed the sinister track northwards to Durham, his army moving in three "battles" or divisions, about 60,000 men in all,¹¹ and only half of them mounted. From Durham he struck north-westwards into the wild, hilly district towards the Tyne in the hope of overtaking and intercepting the marauders. For two days the English army toiled over the rough country, dragging its cumbersome baggage train over well-nigh impassable paths, in pursuit of an enemy who was nowhere to be seen—man and beast ready to drop each evening with fatigue. On the third day it reached the Tyne at a spot where there was a ford, by which the Scots must pass on their way homeward. To cross over and hold the ford from the northern bank against the returning Scots was the infallible device which suggested itself to Edward's generals for catching the Scots in a trap. Edward's sapient generals reckoned without their host. For eight days the English army sat at the north end of the ford ready to pounce on its prey, suffering terribly from hunger and the torrential rains—a roaring flood between it and the southern end. The country around was bleak and

¹⁰ Froissart, ii. 131-138.

¹¹ Fordun, i. 352, estimates the number at over 100,000. The numbers of the chroniclers are never exact, and often not approximately reliable.

inhospitable, and it was not till the fourth day that scanty supplies could be brought to the famishing camp from Newcastle. And still the Scots came not, and murmurs of angry discontent at the miserable plight, in which the sapience of its leaders had landed the army, became rife. At length it occurred to these sapient leaders to send out horsemen to reconnoitre in search of the Scots, with the offer of a large reward to quicken their zeal. To famish in that bleak place to such little purpose was not sapient at any rate, and meanwhile the army recrossed the Tyne, and wandered about for some days without even the germ of an idea, sapient or non-sapient, of what it was all about to give purpose to its movement. At length on the morning of the fourth day a horseman, Thomas Rokeby, galloped up with the announcement that he had found the Scots—had, in fact, been taken prisoner, and generously released in order that he might earn his reward. The Scots, it appeared, had all this time been encamped on a hill only a few leagues distant, and were as ignorant of Edward's whereabouts as he was of theirs. While the English had been starving in their own country, they had been holding high festival, in their hill camp, with plenty of fat English oxen, and had apparently been in no hurry to disturb their famishing enemy by the roaring Tyne flood. In his joy Edward knighted the horseman on the spot, and hurried away southwards in the direction indicated, towards Stanhope Park, in the valley of the Wear. Here at last the Scottish camp was descried on a rocky height above the river—a position so strong that an attempt to storm it by a famishing army could only end in failure and needless carnage. After

making a show of attacking, in the hope of provoking a battle in the open, Edward sent a herald to propose that the Scots should come down and fight on fair ground. The English army would retire to enable them to do so; or, if they preferred, they might themselves choose the field, and the English would give them battle. The offer was tempting to the pugnacious Scottish nature, ever persevering in prospect of a fight; but on this occasion the tactics of Bruce, always to fight with the advantage of the ground in his favour, were scrupulously observed by Randolph and Douglas. They would stay where they were as long as they pleased, said Douglas, and if their presence annoyed the English monarch, let him drive them out if he could. After night-fall they shouted and blew their trumpets, in the exuberance of their defiance, in such an unearthly fashion that "it seemed as if all the devils of hell had taken possession of them." Edward's only hope was to starve them out, and for several days the two armies stood in presence drawn up in battle array, harassing each other with occasional skirmishes, but neither venturing to come to close quarters. This hope was frustrated by their retreat on the fourth night to another and higher hill on the same river. The English followed, and here both sides continued watching each other, skirmishing as before, but not hazarding a pitched battle. The monotony of these tactics was only relieved by a spirited attempt on the part of Douglas to capture the English king. He crept down one night from his rocky stronghold with three hundred horsemen, burst into the English camp with the cry, "Douglas! Douglas!", hewed his way to Edward's tent, killed the royal

chaplain, and had almost taken the king before the daring assault was beaten back. At length on the eighteenth night the Scots silently evacuated their camp. By sunrise they were five leagues on their way homewards, whilst the English had been standing under arms in expectation of the attack which Douglas had astutely given out was to be made upon their camp in the morning. Mounting the hill, the starving host found five hundred dead oxen which the Scots had killed in order not to encumber their retreat; a large number of pots, made of hide, and filled with flesh and water, ready for boiling; more than a thousand spits, with pieces of meat ready for roasting; and many thousand pairs of used-up skin shoes. The English had at least the satisfaction of having a good breakfast in their own country—the first for a long time—but they must have eaten it with rather sore feelings. For the pleasure of punishing the Scottish marauders, already over twenty miles distant on their hardy ponies, was denied them, and the army accordingly returned in a dispirited, exhausted condition to York, where it was disbanded.¹²

The Scots had had decidedly the best of it. They had wasted the north of England for nearly three months, and had baffled every effort of a greatly superior army to catch or punish them. They had learned by a long series of successes to despise

¹² Froissart, ii. 131-187; Scalachronica, pp. 153-155; Walsingham, i. 188-189 and 192, who accounts for the failure of the English by the assertion that several of the English barons had traitorously played into the hands of the Scots; Fordun, i. 351-352, who differs from Froissart as to the time during which the two armies faced each other. He says it was only eight days.

their former oppressors, and shortly afterwards they again crossed the border to accelerate, by a second invasion, the recognition of their national rights. They laid siege to Norham and Alnwick, and their aggressive attitude inspired Isabella and Mortimer with such respect that they consented to a truce, and offered to treat for peace on equal terms. The question of the succession to the French throne, which had now become critical by the death of Charles IV., doubtless hastened their compliance. Negotiations were opened at York, where a Parliament was convened in February 1328.¹³ Here, on the 1st March, Edward, as the preliminary of a treaty of perpetual peace, renounced all claim to superiority over Scotland, recognised its independence in explicit and unconditional terms, and declared null and void all documents inconsistent with this recognition.¹⁴ This treaty, which was concluded by Edward's commissioners at Edinburgh on the 17th of that month, stipulated a perpetual alliance between the two peoples, reserving only the obligations of the King of Scotland towards the King of France. This seems a strange and incongruous exception in a treaty which was to guarantee for ever the cessation of strife between the two countries, but as these diplomatic professions of eternal friendship were governed by political expediency, it was as well to recognise the fact bluntly. If, then, in the observation of these obligations the Scottish king should make war on England, the English king was at

¹³ *Fœdera*, ii. 725.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 730. Skene, in his *Introduction to Fordun's Chronicle* i., lxxii., is wrong in dating this transaction 1327. Fordun misled him by giving this date, i. 352.

liberty to retaliate, and this "perpetual" alliance must of course cease. Further, Robert should not abet rebellion against Edward in Ireland, and Edward should afford no protection to Robert's enemies in the Isle of Man and the Hebrides. Edward reiterated his obligation to give up all documents in his possession inconsistent with Scotland's independence, on condition, however, that Robert fulfilled his part of the bargain, and undertook to use his influence to bring about the revocation of all political processes against the Scottish king in the Papal Court. On his part King Robert agreed to pay to the English king an indemnity of £20,000 in three years, and to marry his son and successor, David, to Edward's sister, Johanna, in the following July.¹⁵

The treaty was accepted by the English Parliament, and ratified by the king at Northampton on the 4th of May.¹⁶ In July the five-year-old David was formally married at Berwick to the six-year-old Johanna.¹⁷ There was no gainsaying the full admission of the right of Scotland to its separate national existence, and only the fact that it was made under the influence of an unpopular minister could afterwards afford the slightest excuse to disown it as a transaction dishonourable to England. But the policy which dictated it was so eminently wise that even this objection ought to have been allowed no weight as an argument in favour of a breach of

¹⁵ The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, i. 124-126.

¹⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 740-741.

¹⁷ *Annales Paulini*, p. 341; *Chron. de Lanercost*, p. 261. Both Fordun and Wyntoun give the year 1323 as the date of David's birth (Wyntoun, ii. 371-372). Burton (*History of Scotland*, ii. 307) erroneously dates his birth 1324.

national faith. The Scots had given ample proof of their indomitable temper, and to resort to the barbarous expedients of the invasion and devastation of their country in order to bend that temper could only stiffen their resistance in the future, as it had done in the past. Englishmen had tried the experiment to so little purpose that it would have been both good sense and good policy to submit to the inevitable, however disagreeable to national pride, and give up all thoughts of further trial. At best they could only turn Scotland into a rebellious English province if the experiment succeeded, and this was surely the worst of all alternatives in view of the unyielding temper of the Scots. For the present, however, the arrangement seemed final. The recognition of Scottish independence was absolute, and Bruce had the satisfaction of witnessing the apparent consummation of his patriotic life-work at the moment when his increasing infirmities augured his speedy dissolution. In the following year he died at Cardross. After Mortimer's fall, a year later, came the inevitable reaction, which found a potent leader in the energetic and martial young king, and would not be restrained by considerations of sound policy or good faith.

The odium of this transaction fell on Mortimer—for the time being absolute master of the Government—whose principal abettors were Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln, and Orlton, Bishop of Hereford. Strong in the affection of the queen, he sought to establish a personal tyranny, and incurred the hatred of the barons by his overbearing self-assertion. His insolence was aggravated by the rapacity with which he enriched himself at the expense of the State.

Both together speedily disintegrated the revolution party, and revived the old spirit of opposition to the regime of favourites and the anarchy of Edward's reign. This opposition was led by Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, Mepeham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Earl of Lancaster, the king's principal guardian, who was refused access to his person and denied a voice in his councils, and was favoured by the king's uncles, the Earls of Kent and Norfolk. The tension between the two parties broke into open strife on the occasion of the meeting of Parliament at Salisbury in October 1328.¹⁸ Both Mortimer and Lancaster came at the head of their armed retainers. The two parties came to blows on Salisbury Plain, and Lancaster, apprehending foul play, refused to enter the city, and retired to Winchester. Thither the king, at Mortimer's instigation, marched against him. The earl fled at his approach, and Mortimer made use of this advantage to assume in Parliament the rôle of dictator with impunity. He broke in upon the debates with his armed followers.¹⁹ Stratford fled to Winchester, and the sitting broke up in terror and confusion, without having achieved anything of moment. Mortimer got himself created Earl of March, but his arbitrary arrogance now steeled the determination to bring him to account for his misgovernment. At the summons of Archbishop Mepeham,²⁰ the opposition lords and prelates met at St Paul's, on the 18th December, to consult on measures for the reform of the State. Mortimer responded by gathering an army to overawe the

¹⁸ *Fœdera*, ii. 752.

¹⁹ *Rot. Par.*, ii. 52.

²⁰ *Annales Paulini*, p. 343.

nation, as he had the Parliament. At the prospect of civil war, the confederates, who had not yet been joined by Lancaster, attempted to treat, but the negotiations came to nothing. Lancaster then stepped in to inspire them by his active co-operation. He became reconciled to the Earl of Norfolk, with whom he had been at feud owing to the murder of Norfolk's *protégé*, Sir Thomas Holland—accused of treachery to the late Earl of Lancaster—and now took the lead in drawing up a statement of grievances to be sent to the king. The confederates demanded the fullest investigation into the abuses of Mortimer's tyrannical and unpatriotic regime, such as his absorption of the government in defiance of the king's guardians, and his dealings with the Scots. Mortimer responded by advancing with a large force to Leicester, and laying waste Lancaster's large estates in the Midlands. Lancaster, accompanied by the Bishops of London and Winchester, Lords Wake and Audlley, Henry de Beaumont, Sir Thomas de Roscelin, and others, set out from London to attack him. Kent and Norfolk kept aloof, were in fact negotiating with Mortimer, and at Bedford Lancaster lost heart and sued for pardon, which was granted on payment of a fine of £11,000. On his part, Mortimer professed his readiness to redress grievances, in order to allay the general ferment.²¹

This promise was not kept. He became still more overbearing, and schemed to ruin his opponents. He succeeded in inveigling the Earl of Kent to the block, by causing a report to be circulated that his brother, Edward II., was still alive,

²¹ Annales Paulini, pp. 343-344.

and was confined in the Castle of Corfe, in Dorsetshire. To give an appearance of credibility to the fiction, guards were mounted on the battlements. Some mysterious person there must be within those gaunt walls, and who could this person be but the ex-king? The surmise passed from mouth to mouth until it reached the ears of the Earl of Kent. He determined, as Mortimer had foreseen, to put its truth to the test, and sent a monk to ferret out the secret. The monk was made welcome, and at night was ushered into the great hall, and shown a figure at the far end, dressed in his kingly vestments, and sitting at supper. This figure he was assured was the king, and with easy credulity he hastened to inform Kent that his brother was still alive. The earl thereupon went himself to Corfe, and begged the governor, Sir John Daverill, a creature of Mortimer's, to grant him an interview with his brother. Daverill refused, on the pretext that he had been bound by Isabella and Mortimer to keep his prisoner in the closest confinement, but obligingly professed his willingness to hand him a written message. This message, which promised the prisoner speedy restoration to liberty and to his throne, was carried to Mortimer, and produced against his luckless dupe in a Parliament at Winchester. By this dastardly subterfuge he was condemned for conspiracy against his nephew, and sentenced to death. To prevent the possibility of pardon, he was hurried to the block on the 19th March 1330, and beheaded by a wretch fetched from the Marshalsea for want of a better executioner. Mortimer took care to repay himself for the trouble of concocting this nefarious plot. With characteristic rapacity he filched from

the compliant king the greater part of Kent's lands.²²

He was now at the zenith of his power, for this treacherous deed struck terror for a time into the hearts of his opponents. His ambition and his vanity turned his head. He dazzled the people by the splendour of his display at tournaments, banquets, and other public ceremonies. His retinue was larger and more gorgeous than that of the king himself, and he had the audacity to ape, in other ways, equality with royalty. Had the young monarch been a pattern of his father, this parody of the royal state might have gone on until another revolution had put an end to the mock regime of a craven king and the absolute rule of a detested dictator. But Edward III. was made of different stuff from his pithless father. Young as he was (he was hardly eighteen), his strong personality now asserted itself in drastic fashion. His restiveness under Mortimer's arrogant treatment was quickened by the suspicion of his father's murder, and by the spectacle of his mother's disgraceful *liaison* with his reputed murderer. He revealed his determination to put an end to this scandalous thralldom to Lord William Montacute, and with his aid, laid the train for Mortimer's destruction. He summoned a Parliament to meet at Nottingham on the 15th October 1330. Thither Isabella and her paramour proceeded, and took up their residence in the Castle. They scented danger, and took the precaution to refuse ingress to all but the king and a few attendants. Edward, however, won over the governor, Sir Thomas Eland, who

²² Barnes' History of King Edward the Third, pp. 38-42; Walsingham, i. 192-193; Murimuth, pp. 59-60.

betrayed to him a secret passage into the Castle. On the 19th October the king and Montacute burst into Mortimer's chamber, and after a stout scuffle, took him prisoner, and sent him, his sons, and their adherents, to the Tower, amid the jubilation of the people. Next day he issued a proclamation announcing the arrest of Mortimer and other subverters of the state and the royal authority, and declaring his determination to assume the government himself.²³ Another proclamation directed the holding of new elections of members for a Parliament to be held at Westminster on the 26th November following, in place of Mortimer's unworthy creatures, and summoned those who had grievances to complain of to attend and make them known. Warrants were issued, too, for the arrest of his father's murderers.

When Parliament met, Mortimer was impeached on a variety of charges, which were only too well founded. He had, to abbreviate the indictment, usurped the government, conspired to murder the late king, interfered by armed force with the free deliberations of Parliament, persecuted the peers of the realm, embezzled its revenues, pilfered the sums paid by the King of Scotland, poisoned the mind of the queen-mother against her son, inveigled the Earl of Kent into treason, and otherwise subverted the welfare of the country.²⁴ The peers did not vouchsafe him a hearing, but summarily found the charges against him proved, and condemned him to be drawn and hanged, which sentence was carried out at Tyburn on the 29th November. To his accomplices, Simon Bereford and John Daverill, was ad-

²³ *Fœdera*, ii. 799.

²⁴ *Rot. Par.*, ii. 52-53.

judged the same doom, and the murderers of the late king, Mautravers and Gurney, were likewise condemned to the gallows by default.²⁵ His most guilty accomplice, the queen-mother, was left unscathed, and retired to Castle Rising in Norfolk on an allowance of £1,000 a year.²⁶

²⁵ Murimuth, pp. 61-64 ; Knighton, Chronicon, edited by J. R. Lumby, i. 453-458 ; Scalachronica, pp. 157-158 ; Barnes, pp. 46-54.

²⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 835.

CHAPTER III.

THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION AND HOMAGE TO THE FRENCH CROWN (1327-1331).

IT is from this date that the reign of Edward III. really begins. Though only eighteen, he had already been married two years to Philippa, daughter of Count William of Hainault, and was already a father, his eldest son, the future Black Prince, having been born on the 15th June 1330. His education had been entrusted to Richard Bury (son of Sir Richard Angerville), the futurê Chancellor and Bishop of Durham. The son of a supine father and a profligate mother, the influences of his early youth were such as to sap the principles of morality and beget a blasting cynicism. Nevertheless Edward passed through these trying experiences unscathed. His strong nature saved him from the vices on which a weaker youth would have made inevitable shipwreck, and in natural shrewdness, martial ardour, love of action, intellectual power, capacity for ruling men and rousing their enthusiasm, he presents the most complete contrast to the poor creature that begat him. The only respects in which he bore a resemblance to his father were in his tall stature and comely face. His mother had shown a bold and unscrupulous energy which was transmitted to her son, and in the lad of eighteen England had found a ruler well fitted to raise her prestige,

and curb dissension with a strong hand. This boy king of eighteen, who had taken the initiative in casting down the disgraceful tyranny of an insolent dictator, and had announced his intention of governing in accordance with the principles of justice and honour,¹ had in him the making of a great legislator and warrior. The sequel will show how he performed the promise of his *début* as actual king, and will develop his character in due course. It will reveal much in his personality and his career to warrant us in calling him the Napoleon of the fourteenth century. Criticism will doubtless have occasion to find fault with his government and his foreign policy, but it will never attribute weakness to either, except in his last declining years, when his vigour and his sagacity failed him. His reign is that of a potent personality, exuberant in action, and moving the world of its day with a force not always wisely directed, but always incisive and far-reaching. It is dramatic from beginning to end, for it is one long story of war and aggression. The young king was the incarnation of the aggressive English spirit. The predominance of England, the supremacy of its king, are the main doctrines of his political creed, the chief factors of his political action. His devotion to this political creed involved him in incessant war—war with Scotland, war with France, war with Spain—wars crowned with memorable victories, and investing the history of England during his reign with an international complexity which transforms it practically into the history of Western Europe for half a century.

¹ See Proclamation in Walsingham, i. 187-188; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 799 (20th October 1330).

This warlike spirit led to evil consequences for England and Europe. The attempt to conquer France was both mischievous and foolish, and Edward cannot escape the censure of wasting the resources of England and overwhelming the prosperity of Scotland and France by his quixotic and egotistic enterprises. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that, to a monarch of his bellicose temperament, the temptation to war was great. The unpopularity of the treaty with Scotland—the work of a detested adventurer who had expiated his crimes on the gallows—suggested the revival of the claim to superiority over Scotland as a vindication of the national honour. The extinction of the direct line of the House of Capet raised the question of Edward's right to the throne of France, and in championing that right, the young king could appeal to national sentiment, which, for a time at least, saw in France, as it saw in Scotland, an appanage of the English crown. The struggle to realise these claims is largely the history of Edward III. and his age. Yet there are other factors of that history which add a surpassing interest of their own to his reign. Edward had the fortune to be born in an age in which the modern spirit was already at work. That age witnessed the dawn of the Renaissance and the Reformation, of the intellectual and religious movement which was ere long to produce incalculable effects on Europe, whilst that ferment of social and political questions had begun which was gradually to transform society and its institutions. These factors, too, shall have some share of our attention in their proper place.

France, like England, had passed through an

important political crisis the year after Edward ascended the throne—happily without revolution and civil war. It was called on to face the crucial question which, out of a number of rival candidates, should be its king, and this question concerned England as well. By the death of Charles IV., the youngest son of Philip IV., in 1328, the direct line of the House of Capet became extinct. Philip, who died in 1314, left three sons to follow each other at short intervals on the throne. The eldest, Louis X., only reigned two years. He left a daughter and a widow big with child, and meanwhile his brother Philip acted as guardian and regent, with the approval of the barons. A son was born to Louis' queen, but died immediately, and Philip, arbitrarily applying the Salic Law to the succession to the French crown, set aside the claim of his little niece, Jeanne, and had himself forthwith crowned at Reims as Philip V. He then convoked the States-General, which confirmed his contention that no woman could succeed to the French throne—a decision of far-reaching importance in French history, immediate and future. It bore in it the germ of the Hundred Years' War, and furnished a precedent for the transference of the crown from the House of Capet to that of Valois. Philip's short reign came to an end in 1322, when his brother mounted the throne as Charles IV. He in turn was struck down by mortal illness in 1328. A sinister destiny seemed to pursue the children of Philip IV. Together the reigns of the three brothers extended only over fourteen years, and in the rapid extinction of the direct male descendants of the House of Capet contemporaries saw the fulfilment of the curse of Boniface on his

impious persecutor, Philip IV. Charles IV., like his brother Louis, left a widow—his third wife—big with child ; and meanwhile, pending her delivery, the question arose who was to be regent, and in case of the birth of a daughter, King of France? The question interested England as well as France. Edward III. was the grandson of Philip IV., for his mother, Isabella, was Philip's daughter. He was consequently the nearest male descendant of Philip, nearer than Philip of Valois, son of Philip IV.'s brother, Charles. Should Edward or Philip, the grandson or the nephew, be entrusted with the regency, and ultimately with the throne, was the question for the assembled barons and the doctors of the canon and civil law to decide? Philip V., by an arbitrary application of the Salic Law, had secured their approval to the dictum that no female could inherit the crown. This precedent excluded the claim of Isabella, as it had that of Jeanne, the daughter of Louis X. But did it necessarily exclude the claim of Isabella's son, the nearest male descendant of Philip IV.? The mother might not succeed, but the son might. So contended a large number of legal experts. In that case, however, the son of Jeanne, Charles of Evreux, might have a prior claim. At all events, the majority of the barons, apprehensive of the consequences to French nationality from the domination of a foreign sovereign, and having a predilection for the claims of a feudal baron, one of their own number, preferred the claim of the nephew, on the ground that if Isabella could have no right to the succession, her son could not inherit any right either, and declared Philip of Valois regent. The birth of a daughter to the widow of Charles IV. shortly after (April 1328)

opened the way to the throne itself. On the 29th May Philip was crowned at Reims.² "Thus," says Froissart, "the said kingdom departed from the direct line. Whence great wars are born, and brought to pass, and great destruction of land and people in the kingdom of France and elsewhere, as you may learn in the sequel."³ A black record of international strife it is, disastrous for France, fruitless for England, a huge crime, an unspeakable folly, yet replete with interest, and fraught with lessons for him that can read.

Would Edward III. accept the decision, or rather would Isabella and Mortimer do so for him? Shortly after their advent to power, they had concluded a treaty with Charles IV. by which the quarrel between Charles and Edward II. in reference to Aquitaine was adjusted⁴ (31st March 1327), each side agreeing to restore its conquests. On the death of Charles in the beginning of the following year, their first impulse was to assert Edward's claim to the vacant throne, and even to prosecute it by force.⁵ They strove to enlist partisans in Gascony, Navarre, and Languedoc, and entered into negotiations for an alliance with the Duke of Brabant, the communes of Flanders, the Count of Los, and other magnates of the Low Countries.⁶

Philip VI. had meanwhile been engaged in assist-

² For the discussion of this question, see *Cont. of G. de Nangis*, edited by Gueraud, ii. 82-84; Froissart, ii. 20-21, 213-215.

³ Froissart, ii. 21.

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 700.

⁵ See letters to the magnates of Gascony, Navarre, and Languedoc, in which Edward expresses his determination to prosecute his rights (*Fœdera*, ii. 736).

⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 744.

ing Louis de Creçy, Count of Flanders, to suppress an insurrection of the restive, democratic Flemings against the count's despotic rule. He entered Flanders at the head of the splendid array of French chivalry, burning with a desire to avenge the crushing defeat inflicted by the high-spirited Flemish burghers on the French nobility at Courtrai in 1303. After pillaging in the fashion of the time, he encamped in the neighbourhood of Cassel, and here Nicolas Zonnekins and his valorous burghers had well-nigh repeated the exploit of Courtrai. By a swift and noiseless approach in the dusk of the evening of 23rd August, the three divisions of the Flemings were upon the three French divisions before a suspicion of their advance could precede them. Philip, who commanded one division, was sitting at supper in his tent. So was the King of Böhemia, John of Luxemburg, the commander of the second division. The Count of Hainault was equally off his guard. Only after desperate fighting did the surprised army, "as by a downright miracle," beat back the shock, and repeat the carnage of Courtrai at their enemy's expense. "Of the sixteen thousand Flemings not a soul escaped," says Froissart⁷—with exaggeration, no doubt. Philip stained his victory by burning Cassel and massacring its inhabitants, but otherwise he showed great moderation in declining to improve it for his own benefit. He reinstated the count with much good advice as to the reform of his despotic ways, and a warning that, if he required to come a second time, he would not be so generous.⁸ He returned to make a triumphant entry into Paris, splendidly decorated in honour of

⁷ ii. 124.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

the occasion, and to receive the homage of his barons and good towns. The most powerful vassal of all—Edward of England—was not there, and Philip summoned him to appear and do homage for Aquitaine and Ponthieu. The summons being disregarded, he repeated it in the beginning of the following year. Mortimer and Isabella now hesitated to go the length of war in support of Edward's claim. The victory of Cassel had frustrated the plan of an active confederation on its behalf; and Edward, therefore, after referring the question to Parliament, wrote to Philip announcing his intention to do homage at the earliest opportunity⁹ (14th April 1329).

The England beyond the Channel had dwindled greatly since the days of Henry II. In the twelfth century Henry II. and Richard I. were lords of the western half of France, which at this date was by no means a homogeneous kingdom. By inheritance and marriage Henry became feudal superior of Normandy, Anjou, Brittany, Guienne, and Gascony—in short, of the whole country from the Somme to the Pyrenees. He was not absolute sovereign of these extensive territories, for he did homage for them to his overlord, the King of France. But their feudal nobility were his immediate vassals, and as their feudal superior he could demand their services in war. His territorial power as King of England and lord of half of France was thus far greater than that of a Louis VIII. Richard I. maintained this splendid inheritance intact, but more than half of it was lost to the English crown under the weak regime of Richard's brother, John. John's reign affords a

⁹ *Fœdera*, ii. 760.

striking parallel to that of Edward II., in respect both of internal disorder and external defeat and disgrace. Like Edward, John, the unworthy son of a strong king, was a hopeless incapable both as ruler and general, and bequeathed to his successor, Henry III., a crown shorn of much of its power and splendour. Neither Henry III. nor Edward I. succeeded in recovering the lost French possessions of their ancestors, and Edward had to defend what remained from the bellicose ambition of Philip IV. Philip, continuing the policy of the French kings of transforming feudal France into a national unity, was eager to incorporate Aquitaine with the French kingdom. The strained relations between the two monarchs at length culminated in war in 1294, when Edward, provoked by Philip's double dealing, renounced his homage for Aquitaine, and declared that he would henceforth hold the duchy in his own right.¹⁰ The war lasted more or less intermittently till 1299, when Pope Boniface VIII. succeeded in mediating a truce. This agreement was clinched by the marriage of Edward with Margaret, the half-sister of Philip (12th September 1299), who brought with her as dowry the counties of Ponthieu and Montreuil in the north of France. The final settlement of the dispute was delayed till 1303, when Philip, who had quarrelled with Boniface, and feared lest his intrigues with Edward should bring about a renewal of the war, restored his conquests in Gascony.¹¹ On the accession of Charles IV. in 1322 dissension broke out anew. Charles summoned Edward II. to do homage for Aquitaine and Ponthieu. Edward put off his envoys with evasive

¹⁰ Walsingham, i. 47.

¹¹ Ibid., i. 99.

answers, and in the following year, taking advantage of a border imbroglio with the English seneschal of Aquitaine, Radulph Basset, the French king sent Charles of Valois with an army to invade the duchy. Charles overran Agennois as far as La Reole before the Earl of Kent succeeded in patching up a truce, pending peace negotiations.¹² Through the mediation of Isabella, Prince Edward was sent over in 1325 to do homage to Charles, as Duke of Aquitaine, and, as we have seen, Isabella and Mortimer concluded a treaty of peace shortly after the dethronement of Edward II. They reluctantly consented, too, that Edward III. should repeat the act of homage to Philip VI.

For this purpose he crossed to France in the end of May 1329,¹³ and was received by Philip with great state at Amiens. There, on the 6th June, in the beautiful old cathedral, amid much parade of feudal ceremony, Edward, as Duke of Guienne and peer of France, acknowledged fealty to Philip. Rather hesitatingly, however, and "by word of mouth only," without doing "liege homage"—that is, without placing his hands, with head bared and sword ungirt, in those of the King of France, in token of full homage.¹⁴ He protested that he must first examine the obligations which he owed to Philip as his liege lord, in virtue of ancient treaties. With this partial

¹² Walsingham, i. 168-175; Murimuth, pp. 39-42.

¹³ *Fœdera*, ii. 764 (26th May).

¹⁴ The account of the proceedings in *Fœdera*, ii. 765, bears that Edward did place his hands in those of Philip, but this is evidently a draft prepared beforehand, the assertion being apparently allowed to stand by inadvertence. In a charter dated 30th March 1331, it is distinctly stated that Edward did not do so. Lettenhove, note to Froissart, ii. 319.

admission of his feudal superiority Philip was fain to be content in the meantime, on the understanding that Edward should make profession of full homage if, on inquiry, he found that his ancestors had done so. Edward's hesitation was partly inspired by political differences between the two monarchs. Mortimer and Isabella were, therefore, in no hurry to satisfy Philip on the question of homage until they were assured on the score of the negotiations as to the disputed territories on the borders of Aquitaine. They procrastinated, calculated the chances of war, and amused his ambassadors with evasive answers all through the winter of 1330. The negotiations threatened to break down, and war was regarded as so probable an alternative that Parliament and Convocation were asked to grant a subsidy¹⁵ (February and March 1330), and preparations were made against this emergency. The war scare was, however, ended by an adjustment of the territorial dispute, each side undertaking to restore the places claimed by the other. Former treaties between England and France were confirmed, and Edward agreed to pay two sums of 50,000 marks and 60,000 livres de Paris.¹⁶ The question of the restitution of Agennois by Philip was, however, left in abeyance, apparently for future negotiation, and another year passed before Edward (Mortimer having been hanged in the interval) could bring himself to make unreserved profession of homage. "We recognise," to quote the instrument to which he adhibited his name and seal on the 30th March 1331, "that the homage which we did at Amiens to the King of France was, is, and

¹⁵ *Fœdera*, ii. 783.

¹⁶ Treaty of Vincennes, 8th May 1330; *Fœdera*, ii. 791.

ought to be accounted liege homage, and promise him faith and loyalty, as Duke of Aquitaine and Peer of France, and Count of Ponthieu and Montreuil."¹⁷ Four days later Edward left Dover on a secret visit to Philip. His journey was ostensibly undertaken to fulfil a vow;¹⁸ its real object was political.¹⁹ He did homage in due form,²⁰ and the friendship between the two monarchs was further cemented by concessions on the part of Philip.²¹ The prospect of amicable relations between the two countries was never more reassuring. To recognise Philip as his liege lord was to recognise his title to the crown of France, and with the exception of Edward's claims to Agennois, which Parliament, in 1331, recommended should be settled by further negotiation,²² every pretext for dissension and conflict had disappeared. It was from north of the Tweed, not from across the Channel, that the first spark of the great European conflagration was to come.

During the brief lull preceding the renewal of the war with Scotland, Edward busied himself with the task of inaugurating firm government. The long period of anarchy through which England had passed was only too apparent in the paralysis of law and authority. The roads and woods were infested with brigands, who were protected by many of the barons, and plundered wayfarers with impunity. Armed men

¹⁷ *Foedera*, ii. 813; *Froissart*, ii. 234-236, misdates this letter by a year.

¹⁸ *Foedera*, ii. 815 (4th April).

¹⁹ *Walsingham*, i. 193; *Murimuth*, p. 63.

²⁰ *Foedera*, ii. 813; cf. 815.

²¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 816.

²² *Rot. Par.*, ii. 60, 61.

even invaded the Sheriff Courts and browbeat the judges. Parliament itself was not exempt from these violent scenes. Legislation by the sword was more in keeping with the fierce spirit of the times than legislation by debate, and members did not scruple to point their arguments by appearing fully armed. During the session in London, in January 1332, two barons, William de la Zouche and John de Grey, drew their swords, and proceeded to fight out their altercation in prize-ring fashion. Still worse, two clerics of Chancery rushed at each other in the great hall of Westminster, in the presence of the king, the bishops, and other magnates, and one of them stretched his antagonist dead on the floor.²³

The London mob signalised its turbulence by frequent riots, and so little respect was left for authority that even the street urchins went the length, in their pranks, of insolently slapping law and order in the face. Tournaments and other public displays were frequently mere occasions for the outbreak of sedition and anarchy. Mortimer had tried to restore order,²⁴ but Mortimer's regime was too arbitrary and selfish to command respect, and it was only after his fall that Edward made his strong will felt in the enforcement of obedience to authority. He forbade tournaments, except when held under his own patronage; for he himself excelled in the joust, and frequently presided over the lists, and broke a lance, in gorgeous masque, in the presence of the chivalry and the fairest ladies of the kingdom.²⁵ At his instigation, Parliament, in the session of March 1332, dealt with the rampant lawlessness in resolute fashion.

²³ Annales Paulini, p. 355.

²⁴ See Foedera, ii. 753, *et seq.*

²⁵ Annales Paulini, p. 354.

Its first care was to guard its own privileges from violation, by enacting that "no man, upon pain of forfeiting all his substance, should presume to wear armour or arms in London, Westminster, or their suburbs."²⁶ To preserve the peace throughout the country, guardians with full powers were ordered to be appointed in every county.²⁷ The effect of this energetic legislation was visible in the gradual restoration of order and security. While there was lawlessness in England, there was rebellion in Ireland; and Edward, with characteristic energy, was preparing to cross the Irish Sea to assert his authority, when his intention was frustrated by the trend of events in Scotland.

²⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 64.

²⁷ Ibid., ii. 64-65.

CHAPTER IV.

DUPPLIN MOOR AND HALIDON HILL (1332-1333).

THE centre of interest now gravitates for a time to Scotland, and on this side diplomacy was helpless to avert war. The treaty of Northampton was too favourable to Scotland to bear long the strain of English dissatisfaction at its terms, and English soreness at the reverses of Edward II.'s reign. Scotland had the misfortune, at this critical conjuncture, to have a child for its king. David, Bruce's son, was only eight years old when he was crowned at Scone, on the 24th November 1331,¹ along with his queen, Johanna, Edward's sister, who was only a year older. Both the marriage, which had taken place three years earlier, and the coronation, were, of course, merely nominal. The government was exercised by the Regent Randolph, Earl of Moray. It could not have been placed in abler or more experienced hands, but he only survived Robert Bruce three years, and died just as Scotland was exposed once more to the menace of English invasion and civil war. Two years before his decease, the country suffered another dire calamity in the death of James Douglas, its ablest general, who fell in August 1330² fighting against the

¹ Fordun, i. 354.

² Ibid., i. 353.

Moors, on his way to the Holy Land with the heart of Bruce.³

There were elements of trouble which boded ill for the stability of the work of the three great patriots whom death inopportunately snatched away at this critical period. The Scottish barons, who had taken the wrong side in the struggle maintained by Wallace and Bruce (Angus and Athole, for instance), were eager to recover their forfeited estates. There was, too, a considerable number of English barons (the Percys, the Talbots, the Mowbrays, the De Quinceys, the Fitzwarrens, the De la Zouches, the Ferrers, &c.) who held lands in Scotland, and had lost them during the War of Independence. Of these, Henry Percy, Thomas Wake, and Henry de Beaumont had been guaranteed the restitution of their forfeited Scottish estates by a stipulation of the treaty of Northampton. Percy's claim was satisfied,⁴ but the regent refused to restore the lordship of Liddell to Thomas Wake, and the earldom of Buchan to Henry Beaumont, who had signalised their hostility to Scotland by their inveterate opposition to the treaty of Northampton. Edward, as he was bound to do, espoused their rights, and repeatedly urged Randolph to satisfy them.⁵ His refusal was unwise, since it gave Edward a well-grounded pretext for remonstrance, and might furnish a handy pretext for interference. On the other hand, Edward had given umbrage to the Scottish Government by

³ So the chroniclers, but in the Papal Bull his mission is said to be to bear the heart of Bruce "in war against the Saracens" (Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta*, p. 251).

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 804 (20th December 1330).

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 804, 809, 837.

his reception of Edward Baliol, son of John Baliol, ex-King of Scotland.⁶ Baliol now saw his chance, as the leader of these discontented lords, English as well as Scottish, of winning the Scottish crown. He set about concocting with Beaumont, Athole, Angus, Mowbray, and others an expedition to Scotland for the purpose of vindicating his own claim to the throne and theirs to their forfeited estates.⁷ As a preliminary, they took the precaution of making away with the regent, who died suddenly at Wemyss, in Fife, on the 20th July 1332, from the effects of poison administered by an accomplice during a banquet.⁸ They sounded Edward as to the revival of the English claim to the homage of the Scottish king, which Baliol professed his readiness to acknowledge in return for his co-operation.⁹ Edward would fain have jumped at the proposal, but he was bound by the Pope, under a penalty of £20,000, to preserve the peace with Scotland,¹⁰ and refused his patronage or active assistance. But he put no effective obstacle in the way of the expedition sailing from Ravenspur, at the mouth of the Humber, in the end of July. He had, indeed, enjoined the guardians of the northern marches to prevent the inroad across the border of Baliol and his confederates into Scotland.¹¹ He must have known, however, that they were preparing to carry out their intention in spite of this prohibition, and it does not look well for the sincerity of his professions that he did not take more effective measures

⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 799.

⁷ *Wyntoun*, ii. 382, 383.

⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 383. Their guilt has been denied, but it is explicitly stated by this chronicler.

⁹ See Barnes, p. 58.

¹⁰ Knighton, i. 461,

¹¹ *Fœdera*, i. 833 (24th March 1332).

to prevent the sailing of an expedition, openly prepared by Englishmen in England, against Scotland! It bootéd little that he exhorted Percy and other northern magnates¹² to preserve the peace on the border after the expedition had entered the Forth and landed at Kinghorn! If he was not guilty of culpable connivance, he was at any rate guilty of culpable neglect in permitting this flagrant breach of international law, and, viewed in the light of subsequent events, his equivocal conduct leaves room enough for suspicion as to his good faith! He was evidently watching for the opportunity to profit by this imbroglio. The refusal to fulfil an unimportant stipulation of the treaty of Northampton was no reason for evidently countenancing, indirectly at least, an expedition which was to lead on to the retraction of the solemn admission of Scottish independence, made before the negotiation of that treaty.

After the death of Randolph, the Scottish Estates met at Perth, and on the 2nd August elected Donald, Earl of Mar, and nephew of Bruce, to the regency. The choice, which was far from being unanimous, was unfortunate, for Mar was a weak man, and as the sequel was to show, utterly devoid of military capacity. On the day of the election the news arrived that Baliol's fleet had entered the Forth. Four days elapsed before he attempted to land at Kinghorn, and in this interval a force was hurriedly gathered by the Earl of Fife and Alexander Seton to defend the shore. The rugged ground was in favour of the defenders, but the English archers effectively protected the disembarkation of the men-

¹² *Fœdera*, ii. 843. The date of the proclamation is the 9th August 1332, when Baliol had already landed in Fife.

at-arms and their horses. In the skirmish Seton was killed, and Fife and his followers put to flight.¹³ Baliol's little army consisted of at most but three hundred horse and three thousand foot,¹⁴ yet with this small force he boldly began his march inland, after sending his fleet round to the Tay. He had been in communication with powerful Scottish barons, including Mar himself,¹⁵ and evidently calculated on a revolution in his favour. From Dunfermline, where he rested two days, he advanced north-westwards across the Ochils into Strathearn. The audacity of the march was so mad that the Scots made fun of the would-be conqueror and his scanty following, moving, it seemed, to certain destruction. On the 11th August he encamped near Forteviot,¹⁶ in a narrowish valley, with the Earn in front to the west, and the Ochils behind to the east, as the only protection against the gathering Scottish host, fell fighters, as the English had experienced to their cost, and heartened by a long series of victories. For Baliol's calculation had miscarried. Not a man joined his standard, while Mar with thirty thousand men was advancing southwards from Perth, on the one hand, and the Earl of March, on the other, was moving northwards from Stirling with a second army, equally strong. There was misgiving and dismay in the English camp on the Earn. Mar repudiated the would-be king,¹⁷ and only a miracle could save Baliol's little force from being crushed.

¹³ Walsingham, i. 193; *Gesta Edward III.*, Auctore Bridlingtoniensi, p. 104; Fordun, i. 354; Wyntoun, ii. 384.

¹⁴ Knighton, i. 462. ¹⁵ *Gesta Edward III.*, Auct. Brid., p. 104.

¹⁶ Fordun, i. 354. Wyntoun calls the spot "Mylnarys Akyre"—Milne's Acre.

¹⁷ *Gesta Edward III.*, Auct. Brid., p. 105.

between the two Scottish armies. But it would have exercised the ingenuity of the most credulous prophet to predict where the miracle was to come from. And yet the miracle happened. Treason, if not revolution, was at work. On the evening of the 11th August Mar reached Dupplin Moor, on the high ground overlooking the left bank of the Earn. March was only about eight miles distant at Auchterarder, on his way north to join him. In three hours at most the two armies might have effected a junction. Neither leader was apparently in a hurry to pounce on his prey, seeing it was already in the trap, and Mar had not even taken the trouble to set a watch to prevent a possible surprise. His army spent the night carousing over the wine and ale fetched from Perth. Here, then, was a chance for the silent, anxious handful of resolute men down below on the other side of the Earn, if it could but find a ford where to cross. Luckily for Baliol, the dissensions which had preceded Mar's election were still active, and there were old sores enough on the score of past forfeitures to corrupt the patriotism of some of the Scottish barons. There was one traitor, at all events, in the Scottish camp, Murray of Tullibardine, who covertly sent Baliol word where to find a ford. Towards morning the English quietly crossed by a passage marked by a stake, planted in the middle of the river, and swarming up the rising ground of Gask towards Dupplin, fell upon the drowsy advance guard of the Scottish army. These were speedily driven into flight, but not before the alarm had spread to the drunken, ill-disciplined host behind. The first to stir were the young Earl of Moray, the Earl of Menteith, Sir

Alexander Fraser, and Robert Bruce, the late king's natural son. With 800 horsemen they threw themselves on the advancing English column in the dim dawn. Before their furious charge the English, who, with the exception of 44 German mercenaries,¹⁸ fought on foot, were forced back, and had Mar had even mediocre ability to take advantage of this repulse, the struggling English must have succumbed to weight of numbers. But Mar acted like the weak, impulsive, but brave fool that he was, and rushing blindly forward with his startled, half-drunk levies, crowded pell mell into the midst of Moray's victorious phalanx. In a short time his army was a huddled mass—those behind tumbling in heaps, in their drunken onward stagger, on those before—heaps on which the arrows and spears of the rallying English did terrible execution. Thousands were squeezed to death—"smored," as Wyntoun expressively has it; thousands more were cut down as they lay or struggled forwards out of the confusion. Before the morning had waxed into day, Mar's army was annihilated, Mar himself, Menteith, Fraser, Bruce, and many other notables being among the slain. The Earl of Fife saved himself and the remnant of his followers by a timely retreat, after fighting desperately and losing 360 of his men. The carnage was augmented, during the pursuit of the fugitives, by Beaumont and a party of horse. The number of the dead was appalling. Besides most of the chief leaders, there fell on that tragic morning 12 barons, 800 knights and esquires, 2,000 men-at-arms, and 13,300 footmen on the Scottish side; while the English lost only 2 knights and 33 esquires, but

¹⁸ Walsingham, i. 194.

not one archer or foot-soldier! The bodies of the slain Scots were piled above each other to the height of a lance. A gruesome morning's work truly for a handful of English, favoured by the idiocy of Mar and his ill-disciplined rabble, and fighting with the courage of despair, to accomplish. The victors as well as the vanquished of course ascribed it to the intervention of Providence.¹⁹

Meanwhile the Earl of March had been loitering peaceably at Auchterarder, and when he at length set forward to join the regent, it was only to learn on the road, from one of the Murrays of Tullibardine, the tidings of this fell disaster. Baliol had not waited to court a second miracle, but marched to Perth, which opened its gates. March followed past that hideous hillside of Gask and moor of Dupplin, where Scottish corpses lay in such deep layers that a man riding on one side could not see his fellow riding on the other.²⁰ He had good reason to curse his laggardness in sitting at his ease at Auchterarder, almost within earshot of the battle, without evincing the slightest anxiety to keep in touch with his fellow-general, or find out what he was doing. Or was he too playing false? His want of enterprise is suspicious, and his subsequent conduct before Perth is more suspicious still. He indeed held on his way in pursuit of Baliol (he had only some four miles to go and could not well turn back) through the wood

¹⁹ Knighton, i. 463; Walsingham, i. 194; Bridlington author, pp. 106-107; Wyntoun, ii. 383-392; Fordun, i. 355; Murimuth, p. 67; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 267-269; Hemingburgh, ii. 304; Scalachronica, pp. 159-160. The Bridlington author has a very full account of the transactions in Scotland at this time, and throws new light on this part of our subject.

²⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 390.

of Lammerkin, where his men cut down branches and carried them in bundles wherewith to fill up the ditches surrounding the city. When the army breasted the intervening hill and came down the slope overlooking the town, it seemed like a moving wood, as Wyntoun, anticipating Shakespeare, expressively says. The wood halted half-way down the slope, allowing the English to take advantage of the respite to barricade themselves with wine-casks, doors, and whatever came handy for the purpose. Why this hesitation? Was March as cautious, or as timid as Mar was rash and brave? Anyhow, there he stood, with an army more than sufficient to avenge the prostrate thousands on Dupplin Moor, whose corpses were hardly yet cold. What were these victorious English but a band of dare-devil raiders, shielding their aggression under the name of an unwelcome pretender? It was a strange patriotism that could halt so passively day after day on yonder slope, baulked by a couple of thousand invaders, cooped up in a wall-less town, two hundred miles from the English border, and disowned, formally at least, by their own sovereign! The truth is either that March himself was playing the traitor to the cause of Bruce's son, and his country's independence, or that he was, supine creature, under the influence of men that were traitors. For such there were in the Scottish camp. "See that ye be," cried Beaumont encouragingly to his men, as March's army stood inactive on the brae above, "merry and glad, and have no doubt, for we have friends in yonder rout."²¹

Scotland was at this sad juncture again reaping

²¹ Wyntoun, ii. 391.

the bitter fruits of a divided allegiance to rival claimants to its throne, which had cost a former generation untold misery. Even the firm regime of the victorious Bruce had not killed the spirit of faction and self-seeking in the turbulent nobility. There were still those who preferred the domination of a client of England and their own petty advantage to their country's independence and prestige. There were still a Bruce party and a Baliol party, and with men of the stamp of a Tullibardine it was a toss up which side they might take, or what became of their country, if it served their selfish, factious ends. Happily there were some true patriots among this self-seeking, squabbling Scottish aristocracy of the fourteenth century, who persistently and, ultimately, triumphantly worked for national ends. Such a man was Archibald Douglas, brother of "the good Sir James," and at his instance, it would seem, March, though suspiciously sticking to his hillside, consented to attempt a blow at the English fleet in the Tay. He sent for John Crab, a Flemish engineer, who had strengthened the fortifications of Berwick. Crab set sail with half a score of vessels, entered the Tay, and attacked the English ships. He captured one, but after a fierce struggle the Scots were repulsed, and all their vessels burned, Crab narrowly escaping by land back to Berwick. After this second disaster, March threw off even the appearance of patriotism, and confirmed the suspicion of his secret intrigues with Baliol by marching away and dispersing his army. So compliant had his connivance been that he even allowed the besieged to make a raid on Methven, and plunder the surrounding district with impunity.²²

²² Bridlington author, p. 108.

Baliol's miraculous success materially swelled the number of his adherents in the central district of Scotland around Perth. The Earl of Fife, the Bishop of Dunkeld, and many other magnates of Fife, Gowrie, Fotherive, and Strathearn, submitted, and crowned him king at Scone on the 24th September.²³ This assembly passed as a meeting of the Scottish Estates, but Scotland was in no humour to endorse the transaction, concluded in its name, and the adherents of Bruce took an early opportunity of proving the fact. They sent the boy king, David, to France²⁴ to await happier times, appointed Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell, brother-in-law of Robert Bruce, guardian in place of Mar, and secretly prepared to vindicate his cause by force.

After fortifying Perth with a turf wall, and installing the Earl of Fife as governor, Baliol went south into Ayrshire to receive the fealty of the barons—among them Bruce's son, Alexander, Earl of Carrick—by the way.²⁵ From Ayrshire he passed through Upper Lanark into Tweeddale in prosecution of his mission. At Kelso he narrowly escaped capture by Sir Andrew Murray. He took up his quarters in the abbey while his army was encamped at Roxburgh. Murray was lurking in the neighbourhood, and, taking advantage of a sudden flood, set to work to destroy the bridge across the Tweed at Kelso, and thus cut off the king from his army. Before he could accomplish his purpose, Baliol's men were upon him in overwhelming numbers, some of them even swimming their horses across the

²³ Fordun, i. 355 ; Wyntoun, ii. 392.

²⁴ Wyntoun, ii. 392.

²⁵ Ibid., ii. 393.

flood to interpose between the abbey and the bridge, while others closed in on the other side, and not only prevented the destruction of the bridge, but took Murray himself prisoner,²⁶ and sent him across the border (14th October 1332).

The *éclat* of this episode was, however, dimmed by the loss of Perth. A fortnight after Baliol's departure, Simon Fraser, young Robert Keith, and other northern barons swept down on this important city, and took it by assault (7th October). Among the prisoners was Murray of Tullibardine, and on him the victors took exemplary vengeance as a traitor to his king and country. He was arraigned for treason, condemned, and forthwith executed.²⁷ This resolute action must have convinced Baliol that the butchery at Dupplin had estranged the Scots rather than cowed them into subjection to his usurpation. This fact decided his tactics, if he had not already secretly undertaken to play the part which he now adopted. This was simply to return to the policy of his father, John, and hold his crown under English protection. He entered into negotiation with Edward for the purpose of preserving his tottering throne and enslaving Scotland in spite of the determination of the Scots to be a free and independent nation. If Edward would recognise his title and help him to maintain it, he would do homage to him as lord superior of Scotland. On the other hand, Andrew Murray had already despatched envoys to Edward to entreat him to disown Baliol, and support his young brother-in-law as

²⁶ Chron. de Lanercost; Scalachronica, p. 161; Wyntoun, ii. 396-397.

²⁷ Fordun, i. 355; cf. Wyntoun, ii. 394.

rightful king, in accordance with his treaty obligations.²⁸

Edward had been watching the development of events beyond the border with the keenest alertness. At a Parliament held at Westminster in September, the Scottish revolution had been the subject of anxious deliberation, and though no formal decision of the part he was to act was given, a subsidy of a fifteenth from the counties and a tenth from the cities and burghs was granted to enable him to forcibly intervene in his own interest, as events should direct.²⁹ Edward accordingly went northwards to York, issuing orders from Nottingham for the mobilisation of troops³⁰ for service against the Scots. At York he received the counter-overtures of Baliol and the Regent Murray.³¹ What was he to do? Support his own brother-in-law, and adhere to his full recognition of Scottish independence? This was the only honest and honourable, and, if he had known it, politic course. Recognise Baliol, and renew the old and baseless claim of over-lordship over Scotland? This was tempting, but it would belie his ostentatious profession of neutrality. Or boldly set aside both David and Baliol, and come in as claimant in the forcible manner of conqueror, doubtless under the blind of a variety of specious pretexts? This was the splendid, if unscrupulous course, and still more tempting for a youth burning for martial distinction, and full of self-confidence. It was indeed what it ultimately came to, for a time, for Edward will crush Scotland for his own advantage, if he can. But in the meantime Baliol

²⁸ *Foedera*, ii. 847, 849. ²⁹ *Rot. Par.*, ii. 66; *Murimuth*, p. 66.

³⁰ *Foedera*, ii. 846.

³¹ *Scalachronica*, p. 161.

would do very well as a stepping-stone to greater things, and political cunning must in the first place be brought into play against these redoubtable Scots, proud of Bannockburn at least, if the patriotism of many of their leaders was such a convertible quantity as between a Bruce and a Baliol. Edward therefore came to terms with Baliol, or rather Baliol with him. On the 23rd November a treaty was negotiated at Roxburgh, by which Baliol recognised himself, in the most abject terms, as the liegeman of Edward for his new-fangled crown, and promised to marry Johanna, who was already the wife of King David, to cede to Edward land in Scotland to the extent of two thousand libratae, and to support all his enterprises as his faithful vassal.⁸²

This transaction displays the hollowness of Edward's previous professions of neutrality, and is as rascally a piece of business as political expediency ever sought to justify, with its cynical or sophistic shuffling to hide its tricks against morality and honesty. Politics in this fourteenth century, especially international politics, is largely a matter of calculation, without reference to principle, except the principle of self-interest. It is a game of chess with which Providence may not interfere!

On the other side there were astute men who could shuffle as cleverly for higher ends, and, in this world of rascally politics, there is some satisfaction in recording the fact, especially as their tactics are not without a touch of grim humour. Archibald Douglas, who took Murray's place as guardian, and

⁸² *Fœdera*, ii. 847.

John Randolph, the young Earl of Moray, put their heads together and begged a parley with Baliol, in order to discuss and adjust their differences. Deceived by the submission of so many of the Scottish barons, Baliol saw in the proposal the climax of his success. At Annan, where he had set up his Court, to be near the English border, in case of emergency, he awaited their arrival. Douglas, young Moray, Simon Fraser, and other stout blades had got to Moffat on their way thither, chuckling doubtless at the prospect before them. From Moffat they set out on the evening of the 16th December, and hurried away southwards with a trusty band of horsemen. At midnight, when Baliol was in his bed, they galloped into Annan with wild hallo, struck down Baliol's brother Henry, John Mowbray, Walter Comyn, and many more, as they hastily tried to offer resistance, scattered the remainder of Baliol's raiders in flight, and just missed taking Baliol himself, who threw himself in his nightshirt on a horse, and rode off, barelegged, in the frosty December darkness, across the border to beg bread and breeches of Lord Dacres. A grim yet laughable termination of his two months' reign, laughable beyond measure indeed, were it not that on the other side of the border he could reckon on all the might of England to restore him to his throne.³³

The immediate result was a series of border raids by both sides, which gave Edward the welcome pretext for forcible interference. Baliol was the aggressor. With an English force he recrossed the border into Tweeddale, laid waste the country,

³³ Wyntoun, ii. 394-397; Fordun, i. 355-356; Walsingham, i. 195; Knighton, i. 465-466; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 270-271.

and took possession of Roxburgh.³⁴ Archibald Douglas retaliated by a counter raid southwards at the head of three thousand men, burning and plundering Gillsland and the surrounding country for many miles, and carrying off a large number of prisoners and cattle, and other booty. As an offset Sir William Lucy and William of Lochmaben ravaged Annandale, and while returning with their booty routed William Douglas, who attempted to intercept them, took Douglas and over one hundred of his followers prisoners, and carried them off into England.³⁵

Fortune could not have done better for Edward than in creating this nice complication. His own treachery to Scotland had been fortune's most effective abettor. An honest and energetic attitude on his part would have nipped the disorder in the bud. He had schemed instead to bring it about, and now he could pose alike as wronged party and as arbiter. He denounced the Scots, with specious appearance of justice, as breakers of the peace,³⁶ and of course; things having come to this pass, he was bound to vindicate his honour by retaliation! But what of his protection of Baliol—at first covert, and now, since the treaty of Roxburgh, no longer concealed? And had not this same Baliol, his creature and agent, invaded Scotland a second time with an English force before Archibald Douglas set foot on English soil? No matter, since it was Edward's set policy to place the Scots in the wrong, and profit by the sophistry of the proceeding. The English Parlia-

³⁴ Walsingham, i. 195; cf. Wyntoun, ii. 396; Knighton, i. 467.

³⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 397-398; Walsingham, i. 195; Knighton, i. 467.

³⁶ Fœdera, ii. 857.

ment, convened at York in March 1333, readily lent itself to this flagrant sharp practice, and formally advised him to put up no longer with the insults of the turbulent Scots, but to assert his claim to superiority over Scotland by force, promising to assist him to the utmost in this laudable undertaking. This patriotic resolution was subsequently proclaimed to the Pope and the King of France as an act of self-defence and righteous necessity.³⁷

As a preliminary, he prepared to reduce Berwick, which had been recaptured by Bruce in 1318, after an English occupation lasting twenty years.³⁸ Berwick, as the key of south-eastern Scotland, was of itself a prize for the possession of which most kings would have acted the sorry part that Edward had been acting, let alone the far greater prize of a whole kingdom. The shifty Earl of March was warden of this important fortress, but the command of the garrison was in the trusty hands of Alexander Seton, whose eldest son had been killed at Kinghorn.³⁹ Baliol began the siege in March with twenty thousand men.⁴⁰ In May he was joined by Edward with a second large force, provided with formidable siege engines, which was constantly augmented by the arrival of fresh levies.⁴¹ The English fleet co-operated in attacks from the sea, but every effort to batter the walls and take the town by assault was

³⁷ Rotuli Scotiæ, i. 255; Fœdera, ii. 860. ³⁸ Fordun, i. 348.

³⁹ Wyntoun, ii. 395; Bridlington author, p. 111; Scalachronica, p. 163.

⁴⁰ Bridlington author, p. 111; Fordun, i. 356; Wyntoun, ii. 398; Murimuth, p. 67; Walsingham, i. 195. From Fœdera, i. 861, we learn that Edward was at Tweedmouth by the 20th May.

⁴¹ See Rot. Scot., i. 225, *et seq.*

fruitless. The garrison held the ramparts even against Edward's heavy artillery, and poured down burning pitch on the English vessels which frequently came up with the tide to harass it from the river. The stubbornness with which it repelled this double attack throughout May and June stirred the enthusiasm of the Scottish people, and in response to Seton's appeal for help, the Scots flocked in their thousands to the standard of Archibald Douglas. It was high time for Douglas to bestir himself, for towards the end of June the garrison was in dire extremity. Some of the burning pitch had ignited a house, and the fire had spread and consumed a large part of the town, including a church, before it was got under. The terrified citizens begged a truce and offered submission. Edward desisted from the assault, but on the morrow Seton refused to surrender, and the attack recommenced. He was reduced by famine to such straits, however, that he himself sent to beg an armistice for fifteen days, and undertook to capitulate if not relieved within that period. He gave up his son Thomas and eleven other persons as hostages for his good faith.⁴²

Meanwhile Douglas was marching southwards at the head of sixty thousand men. He did not venture to attack the English lines, but crossed the Tweed a little above Berwick, and encamped at Tweedmouth on the 11th July. From here he succeeded in throwing in provisions and reinforcements, in spite of the efforts of William Montacute to prevent it.⁴³ He then continued his march towards Bamborough Castle, where Queen Philippa was re-

⁴² Bridlington author, p. 112.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 113.

siding, and wasted the country with savage barbarity, sparing neither age nor sex, if we may believe the English chroniclers, in his anxiety to compel his adversary to follow him.⁴⁴ Still Edward refused to budge, and Seton now declined to surrender on the plea that the stipulated relief had been forthcoming. In revenge the English monarch hanged his son before his eyes. He had already seen another son, William, perish in the waves in an attack on the English fleet. The eldest, Alexander, had fallen at Kinghorn; and yet his spirited wife, with patriotic devotion, exhorted him to bear himself manfully for the sake of his country. "We're young yet," said the lion-hearted Scottish mother, "and may get other bairns in their place. There remains to us the honour of giving them for our country, which is only our due, for so have our fathers done before us."⁴⁵ Most Spartan like, and Dame Alexander Seton, with her heroic *dulce pro patria mori*, well deserves remembrance among the many heroic women of this heroic age. Well might Scotland have faith in her destiny with such mothers to breed such sons, and send them cheerily to death in her defence.

Seton seems to have been so prostrated by this cruel blow that his office of commander was conferred on William Keith. The passing succour proved, unavailing, however, and Keith too was forced to treat on the 16th July. He undertook to surrender on the 20th if the town was not relieved, a second time, by the forcible entrance of two hundred men-at-arms, or its fate had not been decided by a pitched

⁴⁴ Bridlington author, p. 113; cf. Edward's letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴⁵ Wyntoun, ii. p. 400.

battle between the Scottish and English armies.⁴⁶ Keith thereupon set off, as he was permitted to do by a stipulation of the truce, to urge Douglas to return and attack the besiegers. He found him at Morpeth, and pressed upon him the importance of saving Berwick, whose fall would mean the destruction of Scottish independence. In an evil hour Douglas listened to his entreaties, and determined to give battle. He marched northwards, recrossed the Tweed, and on the evening of the 18th July encamped at Dunsparke.

Aware of his intention, Edward had the advantage of choosing his ground. He did so with great skill, selecting the slope of Halidon Hill, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of Berwick, and rising out of the marshy ground to the west, which the Scots must cross in order to attack him. On this strong position he drew up his army on the morning of the 19th July, in three "battles" or divisions. The right, towards the sea, was commanded by his brother, John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall; Beaumont, Earl of Buchan; and Edward de Boune, Viscount of Hereford. He himself commanded the centre, and Baliol the left, towards the Tweed. Each division was protected by bodies of archers, those on the flanks of the right being in command of Athole and Angus. A fourth division, consisting of five hundred men-at-arms, under Sir Radulph Basset and Sir Thomas de Fourniville, was posted in the rear, near the town, to prevent a sally by the besieged. Finally, he drew up a chosen body of horsemen to oppose the two hundred Scots who, according to treaty, were to

⁴⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 865, cf. p. 864; Bridlington author, and Murimuth, p. 67.

attempt to force an entrance into the town. With the exception of this company, the whole army was on foot, and Edward himself, after addressing a few inspiriting words to his division, reminding them of the savage outrages perpetrated by the rebellious Scots in Northumberland, dismounted and took his place beneath the royal standard in the centre. Anon the Scottish army, moving in four divisions, appeared on the rising ground beyond the marsh, led by Archibald Douglas, the young Earl of Moray, the Steward of Scotland, also a youth, and the Earl of Ross. It was an imposing spectacle, that of sixty thousand men, arrayed in the picturesque splendour of the age of chivalry, with banners and pennons flying, and burning with perfervid Scottish ardour to avenge their country's wrongs. But it was a dubious enterprise to cross the swampy ground in the face of those fell English archers, and there were wise heads among the Scottish leaders that augured disaster and counselled restraint. Their advice was overborne by the rasher and more perfervid spirits, who had an overweening confidence in their numbers and were eager to win the glory of succouring their countrymen. On they came, therefore, in answer to the defiant shouts and trumpet blasts of the English, plunging into the bog in front with a splendid but insane impetuosity. Mail-clad knights and men-at-arms, all on foot (the horses left on the hill behind in charge of camp followers), sank up to the knees as they struggled forward into the shower of English arrows, flying this day "as thick as motes in the sunbeam," and fell in thousands as fast as the archers could draw their strings. Every shot told, for the slow advance of the struggling mass below furnished

a target that the most indifferent marksman could hardly miss. Anon confusion spread through the toiling Scottish ranks, and even the perfervid Scottish nature could make little headway, as rank became interlocked with rank in the boggy ground, and each battle became a heaving, huddled, mud and blood bespattered multitude. The rear ranks had already begun to give way when at length, by dint of striding and struggling, part of the army emerged on terra firma, and breasted the hill. Only few indeed came within striking distance of those solid steel-clad masses of the English centre and left under Edward and Baliol. The archers had done their duty too thoroughly, and the havoc and confusion were too much even for these men of granite, and they turned and ran as best they might across that fatal bog, and away in hopeless rout over hill and dale beyond, pursued and slaughtered for twenty miles in thousands by the victors, the slaughter being increased by the flight of the servants with the horses at the first sign of disaster. Meanwhile the Earl of Ross, on the Scottish left, had been making desperate efforts to break through the English right into the town, and here a fierce and murderous combat was maintained long after the rest of the Scottish army had been shattered in flight. This heroic attempt too was repulsed with fearful loss, five hundred of the *élite* of Scottish Chivalry being stretched in their gore on the sward at a place called Heavyside.⁴⁷ The fell havoc of that morning's archery is evident in the appalling number of the slain. The Earls of Ross, Lennox, Carrick, Sutherland, and Strathearn, Archibald

⁴⁷ Bridlington author, p. 116.

Douglas, John and James Stewart, James and Simon Fraser, and thousands more, of higher or lower rank, were among the innumerable dead. The carnage was more dreadful even than on Dupplin Moor. The highest estimate in the English reports is 40,000,⁴⁸ a palpable exaggeration. Another scribe⁴⁹ reduces it by a little over 4,000, and makes the total 35,712, "and more." This, too, is exaggerated. The dead were probably not counted, the area of the pursuit being too wide to admit of accurate computation, but all the chroniclers, Scottish as well as English, agree in the assertion that the number of the slain was enormous. As at Dupplin the loss on the English side was insignificant, less even than in that terrible butchery. It varies between seven and eleven, and here again there is apparent a palpable disregard for truth under the influence of patriotic bias.⁵⁰ Even English strategy and English archery could hardly have repeated the miracle of Dupplin at so little cost.

"Done for Scotland this time!" was the ejaculation on the lips of Englishmen. The inference was natural enough. The remnant of the Scots that escaped slaughter or capture consisted largely of common soldiers, hopelessly demoralised by the crushing fate that had befallen the bulk of the army.

⁴⁸ Knighton, i. 468, whose figures are, however, not intelligible. Robert of Avesbury, *De Gestis Edwardi Tertii*, p. 298, has also 40,000.

⁴⁹ MS. Chronicle by Douglas, monk of Glastonbury, given by Tytler in Appendix to vol. ii. of his *History of Scotland*, pp. 454-459; cf. Hemingburgh, ii. 308-309, and *Chron. de Lanercost*, pp. 273-274.

⁵⁰ Edward himself merely says that the loss was "not great" (*Fœdera*, ii. 866).

There were neither men left nor commanders to lead them, and the spirit of the nation was broken beyond hope of recovery! So reasoned the victors,⁵¹ who entered Berwick the following day in triumph. They were well entitled to indulge in such sanguine hopes. They had avenged Bannockburn, and might have overrun the country at will. All England celebrated the feat in songs of gratitude to the Almighty, and exulted in the sense of returning national strength and restored national prestige. This signal victory opened the prospect of great things to a nation awakening to the consciousness of national ends, after the miserable torpor and the factious selfishness of the previous quarter of a century, and trustful in its martial young king. Halidon Hill aroused the spirit of national self-assertion, so long dormant, and the lust of conquest which was to shape the history of England and the career of its young sovereign during the next forty years. Should Edward elect to play the *rôle* of conqueror, should he seek to make England the dominant power in Europe, England would endorse his aggressive policy heart and soul, for a time at least. Edward had not forgotten his claim to the crown of France as well as that to the crown of Scotland, and after this taste of victory the world might count on a dramatic and convulsive sequel. Scotland must succumb, that was clear at any rate. And yet Scotland did not succumb. Scotland, too, had shown that she could win great victories, and that in defeat she could remain unconquered. Contrary to expectation she was to give evidence once more of the fact.⁵²

⁵¹ Murimuth, p. 68.

⁵² Nec tamen fuit verum, continues Murimuth, sicut inferius apparebit.

CHAPTER V.

ATTEMPT TO CONQUER SCOTLAND (1333-1338).

BALIOL lost no time in reassuming the crown which he had a second time won by the slaughter of so many thousands of Scotsmen. He met with no resistance south of the Forth, but northwards of that river the spirit of opposition was so strong that it was only after pillaging the country, at the head of an English army of 26,000 men,¹ that he extorted an unwilling subjection. Pretenders by the grace of God to the allegiance of peoples adopted strange methods in those days of recommending their claims. They made use not merely of the sanction of the Almighty, but of the co-operation of the devil. Slaughter, depopulation, pillage, unutterable wretchedness was what it meant to Scotland, and what it was ere long to mean to France, as we shall see in the sequel of this history. This alliance of God and the devil, through the agency of human sophistry, seemed to work well, however. Scotland appeared to be cowed into impotence. Only the castles of Lochleven, Kildrummy in Aberdeenshire, Dumbarton on the Clyde, and Urquhart in Inverness-shire held out for King David and independence.² Lochleven was held by Alan Vipont; Kildrummy by Christina Bruce, Robert's heroic sister, and wife of Sir Andrew Murray; Dumbarton by

¹ Knighton, i. 470.

² Wyntoun, ii. 404.

Malcolm Fleming; Urquhart by Sir Robert Lowther. Their surrender was only a question of time, in Baliol's estimation, and he went through the farce of summoning a Parliament to Edinburgh to confirm the treaty of Roxburgh, by which he had bartered the independence of Scotland. It met in the chapel of the Monastery of the Holy Cross on the 11th February 1334,³ and was attended by the Bishops of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dunkeld, Whithorn, Ross, Dunblane, and Brechin; Henry Beaumont, Earl of Buchan, the Earls of Athole and March, Richard Talbot, "Lord of Mar," and "many other notables, clerical as well as laic," says the English reporter.⁴ In spite of this specious assurance, one cannot help being somewhat sceptical as to the sudden conversion of the Scottish Parliament to the theory of the superiority of the English monarch, especially in view of the sequel. It is still more difficult to believe that the great majority of the Scots were willing to associate themselves with the deputies of the English king in a transaction which sealed the subjection of their country to a foreign power.⁵

This numerously attended Parliament was singularly unanimous and expeditious, for on the morrow, the 12th of February, it confirmed, without an obstructive murmur, if the English scribe, Geoffrey le Scrope, may be trusted, the pretty little arrangement concluded at Roxburgh fifteen months before.⁶ It is a significant commentary on the submissive temper of the Scots that Baliol could not trust

³ *Fœdera*, ii. 876. ⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 875. ⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 870, 875.

⁶ Neither Fordun nor Wyntoun mentions this Parliament, and the transaction is not given in the Acts of the Parliament of Scotland.

himself to journey southward to York, where the English Parliament was convened in March, in order to do homage in person to his lord superior. There were, it seems, disaffected men enough lurking in the islands and woods, and watching the first opportunity of taking vengeance on the usurper, and in his fear of being waylaid and murdered, Baliol sent Beaumont and Montacute to excuse his non-appearance to Edward.⁷ It was not till June that he screwed up courage to travel to Newcastle to complete the sorry part of puppet king, which he had chosen to play, by the concession, in full sovereignty, of the best part of Scotland to the King of England. By the treaty of Roxburgh he had undertaken to cede to Edward 2,000 librates of land in Scotland, and by a liberal interpretation of this obligation the counties of Berwick, Roxburgh with the forest of Jedworth, Selkirk with the forest of Ettrick, Peebles, Haddington, Edinburgh, Linlithgow, and Dumfries, now became English territory in perpetuity.⁸ The rest would probably follow on occasion, for Edward's claim to superiority was a mere blind to get the whole country ultimately into his clutches, and Baliol was by-and-by, as we shall see, to fill up the cup of his pusillanimous treachery by actually renouncing the whole of Scotland in favour of his benevolent patron!

The galling formalities of Edinburgh and Newcastle were too much for Scottish patriotism, and an insurrection was the result. The leader was Sir Andrew Murray, who had been released from his English prison on payment of his ransom.⁹ He

⁷ Murimuth, p. 72.

⁸ *Fœdera*, ii. 888 (12th June 1334).

⁹ Fordun, i. 357.

found willing abettors in William Douglas ("the Knight of Liddesdale") and the young Earl of Moray, who had fled to France after Halidon Hill to supplicate the aid of King Philip, and now threw themselves heart and soul into the patriotic movement, along with William Keith, Alexander Ramsay, the young Steward of Scotland, Lawrence Preston, Haliburton, and others. They found their opportunity in a quarrel between Baliol on the one hand, and Beaumont, Athole, and Talbot on the other, over the question of the disinheritance of Alexander Mowbray,¹⁰ another of his Anglo-Scottish adherents. In a few weeks his exotic regime was torn up by the roots. Talbot was intercepted on the 8th September near Linlithgow, while retiring to England, and many of his followers slain. He himself, with Sir John Stirling and Sir John Felton, was clapped up in Dumbarton Castle.¹¹ Baliol only escaped the same fate by fleeing across the border and taking refuge at Ravensholm.¹² Beaumont shut himself up in his strong castle of Dundarg, on a rock jutting into the Moray Firth. Here he was besieged by Andrew Murray, and Mowbray, who had joined the patriots. He held out stoutly until the besiegers cut off the water supply, and compelled him to capitulate on condition of being allowed to retire to England.¹³ Athole, too, was tracked down in the Highlands by the young Earl of Moray, and

¹⁰ Fordun, i. 357; Wyntoun, ii. 406; Bridlington author, p. 119.

¹¹ Bridlington author, p. 119.

¹² Walsingham, i. 196; Bridlington author, p. 119; Knighton, i. 471; Scalachronica, p. 64.

¹³ Fordun, i. 357 (23rd December); Bridlington author, pp. 120-121.

forced to renounce his allegiance to Baliol.¹⁴ The patriots even turned their arms against their self-made lord superior, raided across the border into Redesdale,¹⁵ and besieged William Montacute in one of Edward's Scottish castles.¹⁶

Robert the Steward, youth as he was, had not been idle in the west. After Halidon Hill, he had taken refuge among his vassals in Bute, which was governed for Baliol by Alan Lyle.¹⁷ Two of these crept one night in a boat into Rothesay Bay, and carried off their lord to Dumbarton, where he received a warm welcome from Malcolm Fleming. His lands had been conferred by Baliol on Athole; and there was therefore the stimulus of personal interest to stir his patriotism. With the assistance of Colin Campbell of Lochawe he took the castle of Dunoon by assault. At the news of this success his vassals rose against Lyle, the Sheriff of Bute, took post on a hill near Rothesay, received the onset of his men with showers of stones, and slew the Sheriff himself.¹⁸ The Steward then crossed into Lower Clydesdale, and won back Renfrew and other places to the patriotic side. Equally successful were the efforts of William Carruthers in Annandale, and Thomas Bruce in Carrick and Kyle.¹⁹ In other parts of the country men flew to arms under some doughty chief like Douglas, Ramsay, Preston, Haliburton, Hering, who signalled their prowess by "mony a gud

¹⁴ Fordun, i. 357-358 (27th September); Bridlington author, p. 120.

¹⁵ Bridlington author, p. 121; Knighton, i. 471.

¹⁶ Murimuth, p. 74.

¹⁷ Wyntoun, ii. 407.

¹⁸ The fight is known from this circumstance as the Batayle Dormang, as Wyntoun calls it (ii. 415)—Battle of the Stones.

¹⁹ Wyntoun, ii. 415-416.

juperty," as the chronicler calls the feats of arms he places to their credit.²⁰

It looked ill for Edward's superiority and his annexation of a fourth part of Scottish territory, unless he bestirred himself on behalf of his vassal. He accordingly summoned Parliament to meet at Westminster in September 1334, and furnish him with a fresh subsidy. Parliament readily responded, and Convocation added its offerings and its prayers for his success.²¹ In the beginning of November he joined Baliol at Newcastle, and arranged a new campaign to punish the rebellious Scots.²² With one army Baliol entered Scotland by way of Annandale, and penetrated as far as Glasgow, devastating Clydesdale and Ayrshire as he went. Edward himself crossed the Tweed into Roxburghshire to vindicate his authority in the ceded counties in the same forcible fashion. He dispersed the rebel bands that had seized the Lowlands, and captured some of their leaders. It took him two months to accomplish the task. He then went south to Newcastle,²³ in the confidence that he had reconciled Scotland to its fate. Baliol evidently did not share this confidence, for he accompanied his protector southwards, and still hesitated to trust himself, even under the protection of an English army, in his vassal kingdom.

His apprehensions were not unfounded. The leaders of the insurrection were as defiant and

²⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 417-418.

²¹ Foedera, ii. 895-897; Rot. Par., ii. 447.

²² Walsingham, i. 196; cf. Foedera, ii. 898; *et seq.*

²³ Knighton, i. 472. He was at Roxburgh during December 1334 and January 1335; see Foedera, ii. 899, *et seq.*

aggressive as ever. The garrison of Lochleven Castle, for example, defied all the efforts of Sir John Stirling, who had apparently paid his ransom, and been released from Dumbarton, to reduce it. Stirling occupied a fortified position in the churchyard of Kinross, opposite the castle, from which he directed numerous assaults against the island keep. Taking advantage of his absence on a pilgrimage to Dunfermline in honour of Queen Margaret's day, Alan Vipont, the governor, crossed over, attacked the besiegers in their fort with such spirit that they were forced to surrender, and carried away boatfuls of booty to replenish the scanty larder of the castle. The doughty Alan laughed at the wrath of the luckless Sir John, who swore vengeance when he found his fort empty and dismantled, and swore and battered in vain at the stout old walls.²⁴

This staunch resistance was encouraged by Philip VI., who had already attempted to mediate²⁵ on behalf of King David, and by the new pope, Benedict XII. Edward had refused to treat with, or even to see Philip's ambassadors in the previous year, but he now relaxed so far as to receive a second embassy, consisting of the Bishop of Evreux and Peter de Tierslieu, and even to permit the Bishop of Brechin and other Scottish envoys to come to Newark and negotiate with them.²⁶ As the result of this negotiation, he granted an armistice to the Scots from the 4th April 1335 till St John's Day following, on the condition of the cessation of hostilities by the

²⁴ Wyntoun, ii. 409-412.

²⁵ Fordun, i. 358.

²⁶ Foedera, ii. 903 (22nd March 1335); Murimuth, p. 75; Bridlington author, p. 121.

patriotic party during that interval.²⁷ This concession marks the strength of the adherents of King David, and the potency of the Franco-Scottish alliance. Edward, however, refused to waive his claim to superiority over Scotland at the instance of Philip's envoys,²⁸ and improved the truce to make renewed preparations for war.²⁹

On their side the patriotic leaders met at Dairsie in April, under the presidency of Robert the Steward and the Earl of Moray, now joint guardians, to deliberate on measures for the vindication of their country's freedom. The Earl of March had by this time renounced allegiance to Baliol, and attended the meeting. Athole, too, and Mowbray, Sir Andrew Murray and William Douglas, were there, but their deliberations were disturbed by Athole's turbulent jealousy of Moray. They seem, however, to have agreed on the tactics to be employed for defeating further attempts at invasion and conquest. Halidon Hill had left its lesson, and instead of attempting to meet the might of England in the open field, they decided, in the event of an English invasion, to clear the country by removing the people and their flocks into the hills and woods, and thus starve out the invader.³⁰

They were speedily called on to put the efficacy of these tactics to the test. In a Parliament held at York in the end of May, a third invasion was resolved on.³¹ Edward was determined to crush the

²⁷ This resolution was taken at a Council held at Nottingham. (Fœdera, ii. 904; Knighton, i. 472).

²⁸ Knighton, i. 472. ²⁹ Fœdera, ii. 905. ³⁰ Fordun, i. 358.

³¹ Bridlington author, p. 122; Murimuth, p. 75; Fœdera, ii. 905, cf. 908, *et seq.*

spirit of rebellion once for all, and seat his viceroy firmly on the throne. In the beginning of July, he sent a fleet of 180 ships round to the Forth with supplies.³² In the end of the month he crossed the border near Carlisle at the head of a powerful army, while Baliol marched from Berwick with a second under the Earls of Warren, Arundel, Oxford, and Angus, and Lords Percy, Neville, and Latimer.³³ In addition to his own levies, he had taken into his service the Counts of Namur and Juliers, who were on their way with mercenary contingents from the Low Countries.³⁴

It was impossible for the Scottish patriots to face such a formidable invasion. They betook themselves to the mountains, carrying their goods and chattels with them, leaving Edward and Baliol to spread themselves over the defenceless Lowlands, and do all the mischief possible to an almost solitary country. The two armies, numbering together ninety thousand men, if Fordun do not exaggerate, converged in Clydesdale,³⁵ and marched to Perth, capturing Athole's keep of Cumbernauld *en route*, and spreading desolation and destruction as they passed. From Perth the work of devastation was continued unopposed in the surrounding districts. Nevertheless only a few magnates, among them Athole, Mowbray, Sir Godefrey de Ros, William Bullock, Eustace de Lorraine, sued for pardon, and again swore allegiance to Baliol. Their estates were restored, and the liberties of the Scottish Church and the laws of Scotland, prevalent in the time of King

³² Fordun, i. 358-359.

³³ Scalachronica, p. 165; Bridlington author, p. 122.

³⁴ Fœdera, ii. 912-914.

³⁵ Scalachronica, p. 165.

Alexander, guaranteed.³⁶ The other leaders remained staunch in their lurking places. The conquest of Scotland was as remote as their unyielding determination could make it, though Edward deceived himself into the belief that by ravaging the miserable country; and appointing an Athole guardian on Baliol's behalf, he had made his power effectively felt. He was grievously mistaken. To coerce Scotland he would require to hunt the patriots out of every forest and fastness of the land. The Scots are the very worst people on earth to try to coerce. Turbulent, pugnacious, factious they might be among themselves, but obdurate and defiant to a degree against outside interference. Edward might burn their homesteads and fields, but so long as there was a bag of oatmeal left, and a hole to hide it in, his coercive methods would only steel the determination of these fierce, hardy men to be free. Nay, in the only fighting which took place, the patriots had the best of it. On the 30th July the Earls of Moray and March, William Douglas and Alexander Ramsay, intercepted the Count of Namur while advancing to join Edward at Perth, and routed his force on the Boroughmuir of Edinburgh. The count and his fugitive followers, pursued by the victors, took refuge on the castle rock; they slew their horses, made barricades of their carcasses, and licked up the dew to quench their burning thirst. Next morning they were forced to surrender for want of water and provisions, the castle at that time being in a dismantled condition. Moray treated his prisoner with an excess of courtesy, out of respect to Philip VI. He refused to accept the proffered

³⁶ Knighton, i. 473-475; Murimuth, p. 75.

ransom, and conducted him to the border. His knight-errantry cost him dear. Whilst returning he was surprised by the garrison of Roxburgh, and taken prisoner by William de Pressen. In the skirmish James Douglas was killed, but William fortunately escaped.³⁷

On the 20th August envoys from Philip VI. arrived at Perth to urge Edward to desist from the oppression of Scotland, and join their master in a crusade to the Holy Land. Philip reminded him of the alliance concluded by Robert Bruce with Charles IV., requested him to submit the questions at issue to the arbitration of himself and the Pope, and intimated that, in case of refusal, he was bound by his treaty obligations actively to assist his ally, King David. In reply, Edward announced that he had established peace in Scotland, instanced the ancient alliance of the Kings of France and England, and the affinity of their blood, as a sufficient reason for annulling the French league with the Scots, and refused to submit his rights to arbitration.³⁸

Having thus overawed Scotland and discomfited Philip's diplomacy to his own satisfaction, he returned southwards in September by way of Edinburgh, where he spent some weeks in repairing the castle,³⁹ to Berwick—Baliol again playing the sorry part of attendant on his lord superior. The winter was spent in incessant negotiation. Envoys trotted in

³⁷ Bridlington author, pp. 123-124; Fordun, i. 359; Wyntoun, ii. 420-421; Walsingham, i. 197; *Fœdera*, ii. 918, 923; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 282-283.

³⁸ The letters are given by the Bridlington author, who has translated them into Latin, pp. 124-126; the date of Edward's reply, written from Perth, is 22nd August; cf. Knighton, i. 476.

³⁹ Scalachron., p. 166; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 921.

constant succession between the two countries,⁴⁰ the French and papal ambassadors being unremitting in their co-operation to bring about peace. Their intervention again induced Edward to grant an armistice to "Sir Andrew Murray and his adherents," which was renewed at intervals till the following June.⁴¹ This respite was used to good effect by the patriots in order to regain lost ground. They negotiated merely on the principle of playing fair in order to play false; neither Andrew Murray nor William Douglas had recognised the treaties of Roxburgh and Edinburgh, and had no intention of being turned from their purpose by this diplomatic palaver. If Edward had cause to complain of their want of good faith, they had still more reason to complain of his shifty tactics, which had undermined their country's independence. Moreover, they had ample excuse for again taking up arms in the miserable tyranny of Athole's regime, as guardian for Baliol. Athole was not only obnoxious as a renegade; he made use of his powers as guardian to play the tyrant for his own benefit, waging war on his own account, seizing the lands of his personal opponents, and killing and hanging far and near.⁴² In November 1335 he laid siege to the castle of Kildrummy, where he was heroically held at bay by Christina Bruce. Murray determined to relieve his wife's castle, and at the same time put an end to this petty tyranny. He gathered a force of eight hundred men south of the Forth, and along with March, William

⁴⁰ *Fœdera*, ii. 925, *et seq.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 925, *et seq.*; cf. Knighton, i. 477; Brid. author, p. 127; Chron. de Lanercost, p. 284.

⁴² Wyntoun, ii. 421; Fordun, i. 359.

Douglas, Alexander Ramsay, Lawrence Preston, and other patriotic leaders, hurried northwards across the Mounth into the valley of the Dee. On the news of his approach, Athole raised the siege, and marched southwards to give him battle. On the 28th November he encamped in the forest of Kilblen on Deeside, unaware of the proximity of his antagonist, whose little army had opportunely been reinforced by three hundred men from Kildrummy. At midnight John of the Crag guided Murray by a secret path through the forest fully a mile beyond Athole's camp. Here he dismounted his men and divided them into two divisions, giving the command of one to William Douglas and taking the other himself. While he crept round on Athole's flank, Douglas drew stealthily towards his front. Suddenly in the early dawn the wood seemed to become alive with armed men, and Athole had scarcely time to awaken his drowsy followers by trumpet blast, when the grim figure of Douglas appeared in the path in front. "Earl Davy," as Wyntoun calls Athole, put on a bold mien. "By God's face," he cried, pointing to a big stone near, "we twa shall flight together take." "Stand, Lordie, a bit," cried Douglas, throwing his spear by way of challenge, and following it to the attack. In a moment the sound of clashing steel resounded through the wood. Presently the noise of armed men rushing through the brushwood on his flank heralded the onset of Murray. Athole's men did not wait for this double attack, but took to their heels, leaving their leader to maintain the desperate conflict almost single-handed before he was struck down under a great oak tree.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Wyntoun, ii. 423-427; Murimuth, pp. 75-76; Fordun, i. 260; Bridlington author, p. 127; Knighton, i. 475.

Murray improved his victory to win back the whole country north of the Mounth to the side of King David. He even ventured down into the Lowlands, and laid siege to the castle of Cupar in Fifeshire, which was held by William Bullock and a large number of Baliol's adherents.⁴⁴ It was only in deference to the representations of Philip's ambassadors that he reluctantly agreed to raise the siege. There was no thought of abandoning a jot of Scotland's rights, however, and in response to his summons the patriots met in Parliament at Dunfermline, and formally approved of his nomination some time previously at Dumbarton to the office of regent on behalf of the lawful king. He then retired to the north to lay siege to Athole's castle of Lochindorb.

This bold and successful rising convinced Edward that he must again have recourse to an armed demonstration in vindication of his own and his client's authority. The patriots had slain Edward's regent, set up one of their own for King David, and flaunted defiance in time of truce in the face of their long-suffering lord superior. There was no limit to Scottish audacity. Slaughter and pillage, oft repeated, had made no impression on it. This impervious patriotism must be probed once more—this time to the very core. The rebellious north, whither Edward had not yet penetrated, must in particular pay dear for its temerity. To this end a fresh subsidy was liberally granted by a patriotic Parliament in March 1336,⁴⁵ and in May, Henry of Lancaster and Baliol were despatched to Perth with a large

⁴⁴ Fordun, i. 360; *Fœdera*, ii. 930 (26th Jan. 1336).

⁴⁵ Murimuth, p. 77; *Chron. de Lanercost*, p. 284.

army.⁴⁶ Edward himself followed in June, and after fortifying Perth with a regular wall and ditch, set out northwards, with twenty thousand chosen troops,⁴⁷ to raise the siege of Lochindorb, where Athole's wife and other ladies were hard pressed by the indefatigable Murray. On the march he learned that Murray was lurking in the wood of Stronkaltère in Perthshire, and swerved aside to hunt him out. The Scots could see his divisions approaching, and were anxious to be off. Murray was hearing a mass, and none durst disturb him in this devout exercise. Mass over, he was informed that his enemy was within striking distance. "What's the hurry?" cried he, as his horse was led forward and his men were hastily mounting. There is a touch of grim humour in the sequel. In mounting, the strap of his cuissart⁴⁸ snapped. A more nervous man would have set spurs to his horse and been off, broken strap and all. Not so Murray. He coolly sat down on the ground, and ordered his servant to bring him a coffer. Out of this he took a piece of hide, and cutting off a thong, proceeded leisurely to tailor the unlucky strap, while to the knights standing around the minutes of that anxious quarter of an hour seemed like ages. "I have heard some of the knights present say," remarks our chronicler, "that never in all their born days had time seemed so long as when that infernal strap was a mending."⁴⁹ The tailoring finished, Murray leaped on his steed, and he and his men were off out of sight, down a rocky path, in a twinkling, leaving Edward to harass his army in a will-o'-the-wisp chase, and

⁴⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 936; *Walsingham*, i. 197; *Bridlington* author, p. 128; *Chron. de Lanercost*, p. 286.

⁴⁷ *Wyntoun*, ij. 428.

⁴⁸ Armour for the thighs.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 430.

finally give it up in disgust. By such tactics was Scotland saved.

Edward vented his impotent rage on the fair and fertile land beyond the Mounth. After relieving Lochindorb, he held on his way to Elgin and Inverness, burning town and village, castle and cornfield, as he went. Then bending eastwards, he ravaged as far as Aberdeen, which he sacked and burned in revenge for the death of Sir Thomas Roscelin, whom the citizens had mortally wounded in a skirmish in the previous year. From Aberdeen he marched back to Perth, strengthening the defences and the garrisons of Dunnottar, Kinneff, and Lauriston as he passed, and leaving a desert behind him beyond the Mounth, and doubtless, in his own eyes, a submissive people to starve to death in hundreds, as the price of the privilege of English citizenship!

At Perth he was joined by his brother, John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, who had left a blackened waste behind him in Clydesdale. Edward had respected the sacred buildings, but his more ferocious brother pillaged churches and abbeys—notably the Abbey of Lesmahago—and spared not even the lands of those who had submitted to Baliol. An altercation arose between them, Edward charging his brother not only with these enormities,⁵⁰ but with a desire to usurp the Scottish crown as well. I am inclined to disbelieve the assertion of the Scottish chroniclers that in his fury he drew his dagger and struck him dead on the spot!⁵¹

⁵⁰ Fordun, i. 361.

⁵¹ Wyntoun, ii. 418. Both Fordun and Wyntoun attest the deed most emphatically, though Wyntoun misdates it by a year, placing it in 1335 instead of 1336. Wyntoun's chronology is somewhat confused as to the events of 1334-1336. The English

Confident in the efficacy of his two months' devastating sojourn, Edward left Baliol at Perth about the beginning of September with a strong force to wield sway over a ruined and crushed kingdom.⁵² On the way south he strengthened the garrisons of Stirling, Edinburgh, and Roxburgh. Scottish patriotism had evidently received its *coup de grace*. Vain confidence! No sooner was he gone than Murray, who had been lurking beyond the Mounth, again ventured forth on the war-path to attack the English garrisons in the Mearns. So vigorously did he set to work that in the month of October he captured and pulled down the castles of Kinneff, Dunnottar, and Lauriston. This galling exploit again brought Edward across the border⁵³ as far as Bothwell, and Murray withdrew as before into his hiding-places in Angus. Here he spent the winter, raiding forth as occasion offered into the lower districts, braving many a skirmish with the English, and capturing and destroying the keep of Kinclaven. Both sides lived by plunder, and the fruitful dales of Angus, Mearns, and Gowrie were harried into a wilderness, many of their miserable inhabitants perishing by starvation.

With the advent of early spring he fared southwards into Fifeshire. His success swelled the size of his army, for the Earl of Fife and many other Scottish magnates now renounced allegiance to historians merely mention his death at Perth; but one of them, the chronicler of Lanercost, implies that it took place after Edward had left Perth, and the Scalachronica adds that he died a fair death (p. 166).

⁵² Fordun, i. 361; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 946.

⁵³ Bridlington author, p. 128; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 287-288; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 950, *et seq.*

Baliol and flocked to his standard with their retainers.⁵⁴ In Fife his progress was as rapid as in Angus. The castles of Falkland, Leuchars, and St Andrews were battered to the ground, Cupar being the only fortress that successfully held out for Baliol. As in Angus, the country was laid waste and the strongholds thrown down in order to frustrate any attempt at an English reoccupation.

Murray then carried the war south of the Forth. He wrested his own castle of Bothwell from Sir Robert Ufford, made a raid across the border,⁵⁵ and laid siege to Stirling, which was held for Edward by Sir T. Rokeby (April and May 1337). At Stirling his army suffered a great loss in the death of William Keith, who was killed by falling on his lance during an assault on the castle. Edward responded by hurrying northwards to the rescue,⁵⁶ and once more Murray drew off into the Highland fastnesses. Here he waited till the English army had withdrawn, when he again swept down into the Lowlands, conquered Lothian, laid siege to Edinburgh Castle, routed an English force at Crichton advancing to its relief, and chased the fugitives as far as Galashiels.⁵⁷ Edinburgh, like Stirling, was too strong to be reduced, and the hand of death being now upon him, he retired to Avoch in Ross-shire to die, worn out by the harassing labours of the previous three years.

⁵⁴ Fordun, i. 362.

⁵⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 437; Scalachronica, p. 167; Walsingham, i. 198-199.

⁵⁶ Chron. de Lanercost, p. 290.

⁵⁷ Scalachronica, p. 167; Fordun, i. 361-363; Wyntoun, ii. 436-439; cf. Chron. de Lanercost, p. 293, which asserts that the English relieved Edinburgh. This apparently refers to a second attempt.

His wish to fall, like a true knight, in battle, was not realised, but he had at least the satisfaction of having sacrificed himself in the heroic effort to free his country. North of the Forth only Perth and Cupar remained in English hands—an achievement which well entitles him to a place in Scottish annals as the compeer of Bruce and Wallace. He had retained, fresh and unalloyed, the patriotic verve of the days of Wallace, under whom he had fought for Scotland's rights, and he stands out as a resolute and consistent patriot of the noble stamp, whose allegiance to his country refused to be seduced by the wiles or browbeaten by the imposing might of its oppressor. Had Andrew Murray had the direction of affairs when Baliol landed at Kinghorn, there would probably have been no Dupplin Moor and no Halidon Hill to record. He had subsequently proved himself an apt pupil of the school of Bruce, mingling with the heroism of the bold patriot the wisdom and the cool self-restraint of the great commander. To wear out his antagonist by strategy and avoid pitched battles, and thus regain inch by inch the ground lost at Halidon and Dupplin, were the tactics which baffled the repeated invasions of powerful English armies, led by one of the most martial of monarchs, and rescued two-thirds of Scotland from English domination. The cost to Scotland was indeed terrible. When Murray died the greater part of the land was a wilderness, and the population miserably thinned by famine as well as by the sword. The victims of starvation were indeed more numerous than those of the sword,⁵⁸ and tradition has preserved stories of cannibalism to add

⁵⁸ Fordun, i. 363.

to the horrors of the picture. It was a heavy price to pay for freedom, and it speaks much for the intensity of Scottish patriotism that it preferred apparent ruin to national effacement. The devastation was not always the work of the English marauder. Murray himself laid waste⁵⁹ the land in order to arrest its conquest. It was a savage policy, but it was the only policy capable of preserving Scottish independence. The stern patriot was otherwise one of the most compassionate of men—chaste, sober, liberal-handed, devout, ready to share the last bite with a hungry countryman. Alike as hero and as man, he well deserved the honour of interment beside the dust of Bruce and Randolph in the Abbey of Dunfermline, whither his body was subsequently transferred by his grateful countrymen from the little church of Rosemarky.

By the autumn of 1337 the friction between Edward and Philip had become so acute on the score of Philip's encroachments in Aquitaine, and his active intervention on behalf of the Scots, that war between the two monarchs was inevitable. In prospect of coming to grips with Philip, Edward, having failed to conquer Scotland by force, was now anxious to wean it from its fervid patriotism by cunning. He commissioned the Earls of Salisbury and Arundel in October⁶⁰ to offer a lasting peace, but as he did not empower them to recognise the independence of Scotland, the patriots would have nothing to say to them. Edward thereupon made one more effort to crush them before throwing down the gauntlet to Philip. In the beginning of January

⁵⁹ Wyntoun, ii. 439.

⁶⁰ *Fœdera*, ii. 1003.

1338⁶¹ the commissioners returned at the head of an army equipped with powerful siege engines for the reduction of March's castle of Dunbar. Edward himself followed as far as the border with the intention of conducting operations in person.⁶² His progress was arrested by the news of a projected invasion by a Franco-Scottish fleet in the Channel.⁶³ He hastened southwards to prepare against this emergency, while Salisbury and Arundel sat down before Dunbar. The Earl of March was absent, but his place was worthily filled by his heroic helpmeet, Black Agnes of Dunbar, who had inherited the intrepid spirit of her father, the famous Randolph. For fully five months Salisbury kept his engines hurling great stones against the stout walls of the grim keep, whose ruins look down from their dark rock on the North Sea, and across to the Bass. When one of the stones would crash against the ramparts, Black Agnes in derision would send one of her maids to wipe the spot with a towel. A still more galling response were the arrows that came whizzing from the turrets, and stretched many an English warrior dead on the sward. "One of my lady's tire-pins," would Salisbury grimly say; "her love shafts pierce the heart."⁶⁴ He next tried the expedient of a blockade, by keeping a fleet, which included two formidable Genoese galleys, cruising off shore to prevent the landing of supplies for the besieged. In this too he was baulked by Sir Alexander Ramsay, who crept across from the Bass one evening in a boat past the English ships, and

⁶¹ Fordun, i. 362-363; cf. Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 295-297.

⁶² Bridlington author, p. 135; Scalachronica, p. 168.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Wyntoun, ii. 432.

succeeded in landing reinforcements and provisions for the starving garrison.⁶⁵ An attempt to surprise the castle by suborning one of the inmates to leave a postern open was equally futile. The treacherous plan was discovered in time to frustrate its execution, and when Salisbury approached the open gate in the darkness, and was about to step inside, down came the portcullis in his face.⁶⁶ He was saved the trouble of trying further expedients by the order to raise the siege, and join his master in the expedition to vindicate his claim to the crown of France, which was about to sail from Harwich. The breach with France, which had at last widened into a complete rupture, saved Scotland, by drawing the might of England away from the border, and directing it across the Channel. Had Edward been free to continue the coercive policy of marching army upon army across the Tweed, he might have harried Scotland into subjection for a time at least. The moment he threw down the gauntlet to Philip, the coercion of Scotland was impossible. The Scots might now not merely work out their country's salvation with the certainty of success, but as the allies of France, carry the war into England itself, and exact retaliation for the devastation of the previous five years. No wonder that our chronicler heaves a sigh of relief as he tells of the significant turn of the wheel of fortune in favour of his country.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 434.

⁶⁶ Ibid., ii. 434-435.

⁶⁷ Ibid., ii. 435.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRELIMINARIES OF THE GREAT WAR (1335-1338).

EDWARD'S persistent oppression of Scotland had a very marked influence on the trend of European events. Scottish history at this period, as in the two following centuries, has an important international bearing. The hostility of Scotland to England, and its consequent friendship for England's enemy, France, are factors which bore a not inconsiderable share in the shaping of European history from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. This fact bulks into striking prominence at this stage of our story. The Franco-Scottish alliance now comes into play as one of the main forces in a drama which was to convulse Western Europe for fully a hundred years. Philip VI., as we have seen, espoused the cause of King David and Scottish independence. This he was bound by treaty to do, and it was too much in the interest of France to cultivate close relations with Scotland, and maintain its national integrity as a counterpoise to England, for the French monarch to neglect his obligations. Edward's infatuated policy of reducing Scotland to the position of a vassal kingdom must thus sooner or later bring him into collision with France. In this contingency lay the main hope of the Scottish patriots, and to this end they worked

with might and main. Their young king was a refugee at Philip's court, and Philip was as eager to play the *rôle* of the protector of David as Edward was to fill that of protector of Baliol. The men who had gone into exile with King David, or fled across the sea after Halidon Hill, did not appeal in vain to Philip's chivalry, or his political sagacity. During the lull succeeding the peace of 1330, he had proposed to Edward, in an access of the martial religiosity of the age, a joint crusade to the Holy Land. The outbreak of the war with Scotland frustrated the chivalrous but problematic scheme, and revived the dormant antagonism of the two monarchs. Philip forthwith began a series of futile negotiations, in which the Pope joined, and ultimately, as we have seen, he gave Edward formal notice in the summer of 1335 that unless he desisted in his oppression of Scotland, he would actively support his ally, King David.

Philip was as good as his word—nay, he was already secretly abetting the Scots in their heroic struggle. French mercenaries, at his instigation, took service in the ranks of the Scottish patriots!¹ French ships brought munitions of war to Scottish harbours. French ships, too, joined Scottish squadrons in attacks on English ports and English merchantmen. So menacing did these demonstrations become² that Edward, in the summer of 1335, got a fleet ready against an expected invasion, and ordered the Seneschal of Gascony to send out ships from Bayonne to intercept the enemy.³ The

¹ Rex Franciæ . . . multos de Francia in Scotiam contra regem Angliæ præmississe (Knighton, i. 477).

² Chron. de Lanercost, p. 283.

³ Fœdera, ii. 915.

fear of invasion again disturbed him during his sojourn in Scotland in the following summer,⁴ and preparations were once more made to frustrate it. The Scots and their French allies even endeavoured, though without success, to hire the assistance of Genoese, Sicilian, Dutch, and Norwegian privateers, under pretext of a crusade to the Holy Land.⁵ They were more successful in enlisting the co-operation of the Count of Flanders, who acted in Flanders, under Philip's protection, much the same *rôle* that Baliol played, as Edward's client, in Scotland, and actively espoused the cause of Philip's allies.⁶ Edward retaliated by seizing Flemish ships and arresting Flemish merchants in England.⁷ The invasion did not actually take place, but English shipping was exposed to incessant attacks by these Franco-Scottish privateers, and the Channel Islands suffered from their inroads.⁸

Edward complained loudly of this breach of international law. Philip's conduct was certainly open to censure. To permit, in this covert fashion, attacks on England by his subjects, while peace formally existed between the two countries, was as flagrant a contravention of international rights as was Edward's covert complicity with Baliol's attempt against the throne of King David. Philip should have openly thrown down the gauntlet instead of stealthily striking his enemy. But he had at least warned Edward of his determination to help the

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 944-946.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 945-949.

⁶ *Iterum Flandrenses, regi Franciæ foventes, Scotis arma et alia necessaria ministrabant* (Bridlington author, p. 128).

⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 948-952.

⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 953.

Scots, which was more than Edward had done toward his Scottish brother-in-law, whose crown he had so materially helped to place on the brow of an usurper. He could scarcely complain of the adoption by a fellow-potentate against himself of his own initial tactics against Scotland. It is amusing how coolly Edward assumes his right of overlordship over Scotland as Baliol's protector, and ignores all his antagonist's objections on this score. Moreover, he tried hard to set himself right with the Pope and the French king by laying the blame on the Scots in the self-righteous, sophistical style of the resourceful diplomatist. Philip saw through his sophistry, and, like a skilful politician, played his hand accordingly. Scotland must be regained for King David, even if Philip went to the verge of war on its behalf. Embassy after embassy accordingly crossed the Channel to intercede for David's patriotic adherents.⁹ Philip's diplomatists expatiated on the noble enterprise of freeing the Holy Land from the infidel, in the hope of drawing Edward from his crusade against the Scots. This grand attempt was to surpass all its predecessors since the days of Godefrey de Bouillon. An united and enthusiastic Christendom should march under the banners of England and France to the destruction of the accursed Saracen! The Church militant should once more unite the nations, and kindle the glow of a waning enthusiasm in a holy war. The fervid zeal of the papal curia lost nothing in the arguments of the French diplomatists, but Edward was not to be hoodwinked by this pious palaver, and coolly pocketed the money subscribed for this

⁹ Murimuth, p. 76.

quixotic scheme to help him in his crusade against the bellicose Scots.¹⁰ Philip, too, took advantage of the generosity of the faithful to replenish his treasury¹¹ for the purpose of checkmating Edward, and scandalised the Pope and the Church by this sorry exhibition of worldly truckling with sacred things. The crusade scheme at least brought grist to the royal mill.

Unhappily, Edward had the imprudence, at this critical juncture, to probe Philip's *amour propre* on a very touchy side. He became the protector of Philip's sworn foe, Robert of Artois, Count of Beaumont. Robert was the brother-in-law of the French monarch, had contributed most to secure his election, and had been high in favour at his accession.¹² He claimed to be the rightful heir to the county of Artois as against his aunt Mahaut, to whom it had been adjudged by the Parliament of Paris in the reign of Philip IV. He professed to have discovered new evidence in favour of his claim among the papers of the Bishop of Arras, Mahaut's chief adviser, and demanded a fresh trial. Philip consented, but the Parliament found that the documents had been fabricated by the late bishop's mistress, Divion, at the instigation of Robert's wife, Jeanne de Valois (March 1331). Divion was burned, and Robert, as her accomplice, summoned to appear before the Court of Peers on a charge of forgery. He fled to the Low Countries, and the Peers found him guilty and condemned him to banishment and confiscation of lands (May 1332). He was suspected, too, of having poisoned Mahaut

¹⁰ Bridlington author, p. 128; Murimuth, p. 70.

¹¹ Knighton, i. 476.

¹² Froissart, ii. 297-298.

and her daughter, and on all these grounds was now as bitterly detested as he had previously been cajoled by Philip.

Robert believed in magic, and had recourse to the help of the devil. He had waxen images made to represent Philip's queen and eldest son. Even the devil, however, could not avail without priestly co-operation. Robert must get his images baptized by a priest if his incantations were to be efficacious. To prick the images thus named to the heart, or expose them to melt away in the heat of the sun, meant certain death to the persons so represented. Robert tried to persuade a monk, Friar Henry, to perform the ceremony. The monk refused, but some compliant brother would doubtless ere long be found to go shares with Satan. The knowledge of these silly tactics only added to the horror, alarm, and hatred of the French king. He threatened war against Robert's protectors, the Counts of Namur and Hainault, and the Duke of Brabant, and compelled them unwillingly to refuse him their hospitality. Robert thereupon fled in the disguise of a merchant to England to supplicate the protection of Edward III. Edward chivalrously complied, and refused to consent to his extradition in spite of Philip's repeated complaints and demands. "If France is too small for you," said he, on Robert's arrival at his camp at Stirling, "England is big enough. Be assured of my support and protection."¹³ He resolutely kept his word, and Philip's anger was turned as much against him as against the count. The tone of his despatches became more acrimonious, and in his mortification he threw

¹³ Froissart, ii. 305.

Robert's wife and his two sons into prison. This outrage aggravated the implacable determination of the husband and father to fan the elements of quarrel between his protector and his persecutor into war. It was he, more than any of his own subjects, that egged Edward on to assert his right to the crown of France.¹⁴

There were additional elements of dissension to render war inevitable in the bickerings between the two monarchs on the borders of Aquitaine, particularly in Agennois. The question of the restitution of Agen to Edward had been left unsettled at the peace of 1330, and Parliament in 1331 decided to open negotiations on the subject, in preference to having recourse to forcible expedients. Negotiations were accordingly commenced, and continued for several years, relative to this and other territorial disputes, which were submitted to the arbitration of the Parliament of Paris.¹⁵ In this matter, too, Philip's conduct was not above reproach. He nullified the principle of arbitration by favouring the aggressions of his subjects in Aquitaine, as in the English Channel, and Edward is found complaining in April 1336 of the aggressive attitude of Philip's seneschal of Agen towards his vassal, Aymer de Durfort, whose cause was pending before the Paris Court.¹⁶ Edward adopted an energetic attitude short of declaring war, being still handicapped by the Scottish

¹⁴ See Froissart, ii. 297-312; *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, x. 600, *et seq.*; Michelet, *Histoire de France*, iv. 173-179; Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, x. 38-47; Martin, *Histoire de France*, v. 15-18.

¹⁵ For these negotiations see *Fœdera*, ii. 994, and Bridlington author, pp. 131-133; see also *Fœdera*, ii. 880, *et seq.*

¹⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 936.

imbroglio. He wrote to the citizens of Bordeaux, Bayonne, and other towns in Aquitaine to make preparations for the defence of the duchy against French aggression and vindicate his authority.¹⁷

Both sides now prepared for the inevitable struggle,¹⁸ though the farce of negotiation was kept up for some time longer.¹⁹ Philip again sent out a fleet, in the beginning of the summer of 1337, to co-operate with the Scottish captains cruising in English waters in a second attack on the Channel Isles,²⁰ and despatched an army to invade Aquitaine.²¹ Edward retaliated by ordering his admiral in Aquitanian waters to attack the ports of Normandy, from which these privateers issued forth on their hostile cruises.²² The prospect of war with France, in addition to the war with Scotland, was, however, too serious to be lightly faced, and Edward strove to mollify Philip's hostility by proposing a matrimonial alliance between the two royal houses, and offering to pay a sum of money to Philip and join him in a crusade.²³ His Scottish experiences had taught him caution, and led him to consult expediency, if not the rights of peoples, in the prosecution of his ambitious project of adding a third crown to those of England and Scotland. To this overture Philip turned a deaf ear, and Edward redoubled his preparations in the certainty that the sword must decide the issue.

Robert of Artois was meanwhile sedulously nurturing the ambition and the resentment of his pro-

¹⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 954 (13th December 1336).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 956-957 (January 1337).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 958, 966, *et seq.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ii. 965, 969 (30th March and 11th May).

²¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 989 (21st August); cf. ii. 994 (28th August).

²² *Ibid.*, ii. 977 (27th June).

²³ *Ibid.*, ii. 994.

tector,²⁴ and not without effect, as appears from the following incident. One day Robert went a-hunting with his falcon and caught a heron, with which he entered the royal banqueting hall at London, where Edward was holding high festival in honour of his guest, John, of Hainault. Robert presented the bird to the king, saying that he offered the most timid of birds to the least courageous of monarchs, for had Edward been a man of spirit he would ere now have laid claim to the crown of France. The king reflected a little. "It is not true," replied he at length, "that I am wanting in courage. I was maliciously deceived when I did homage at Amiens to Philip of Valois. But now I vow to God, to the heron, and to the queen, that before a year has run, I shall place on her head the crown of France, even if I have but one Englishman to oppose to six Frenchmen." At this Robert laughed a loud and grim laugh, and calling a damsel from the banqueting table, placed the heron in her hands, and besought her to aid him to bear it manfully in war, like King Porus, who long ago had sworn on a peacock, borne by a young lady fair. He then conducted her before the queen, the Earls of Salisbury, Hereford, and Suffolk, the Bishops of Durham and Lincoln, the Lord of Fauquemont and Walter de Manny, who each vowed on the heron to carry war into the kingdom of France. He next turned to John of Hainault, who would fain have excused himself, saying, with unchivalrous bluntness, that he would serve whoever would pay best. At which the English lords laughed heartily, and ultimately John of Hainault took the vow with the rest, the queen add-

²⁴ Froissart, ii. 313, 320-321.

ing that, with the sanction of her husband, she vowed to God and the heron, that if the king crossed the sea to vindicate his rights, she would follow him in his travels.²⁵

In this picturesque ceremony, after the naïve ways of chivalry, was presaged a most fateful drama. The Vow of the Heron was destined to illustrate itself in stern earnest in the bloody international struggle of the next forty years. It looks to us so pretty and playful, yet those knightly gentlemen and fair ladies were committing themselves to a crusade which was to engulf a nation in blood and misery for fully a century. But more practical methods were needful in preparation for so grave a business, and a busy preliminary diplomatic campaign began.

In the first place, Parliament met in March 1337 to listen, if Froissart²⁶ speak truly, to the reasonings of Robert of Artois in proof of Edward's claim to the French crown. Robert reasoned to demonstration that Edward was the lawful King of France, but these English barons, prelates, knights of the shire, and burgesses were cautious, practical men, and preferred, as a preliminary to committing themselves to a fresh war, to sound the Emperor Ludwig and the princes of the empire, particularly Count William of Hainault, Holland, and Zealand, Edward's father-in-law, as to the feasibility of the project. An embassy, consisting of the Bishop of Lincoln and the Earls of Salisbury and Huntingdon, was accordingly de-

²⁵ The story of the *Vœu du Héron* is told, in an old poem given by Buchon in his edition of Froissart, t. i., and in the *Chronique de Berne*, cited by M. Lettenhove in the notes to the second volume of his great edition of Froissart,

²⁶ ii. 320-321.

spatched to Valenciennes, in April 1337,²⁷ to ask the advice of Count William, and negotiate, if possible, a confederacy of the princes of the empire against Philip. It was plentifully supplied with money, and empowered to make promises to any amount of lavish gratuities for future service. English gold was a potent agent of alliance in those, as in later days, and the arguments of the Bishop of Lincoln and his colleagues, in the form of "great sums of florins," backed by abundant promises of more, acted magically on the minds of the needy princelets of the Low Countries and the Rhine, ecclesiastical as well as secular. They were commissioned, too, to establish staples of English wool in the chief cities of these magnates, as an additional persuasive of an irresistible confederacy against Philip. The English wool trade was of itself sufficient to pave the way for a political as well as a commercial alliance, for the industry of Flanders and Brabant was fed by the English wool exporter. The ambassadors had thus a strong hand to play.

Let us precede our embassy to note the complexion of the empire at this period, and thus make its negotiations more intelligible. The chaotic conglomeration known as the German Empire included, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, the vast complexity of states—larger or smaller—between the Scheldt, the Meuse, the Saone, and the Rhine on the west, and the Oder on the east, Lombardy on the south, and the North Sea and the Baltic on the north. Westward of the Rhine—the portion more nearly concerning us—it embraced part of Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, Holland, and Zealand, Namur,

²⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 966-967.

Cleves, Gueldres, Juliers, Luxemburg, Lorraine, the great ecclesiastical electorates of Cologne, Treves, and Maintz, Franche Comté, and, more to the south, Savoy, and the Swiss Confederation. Eastwards of that river the number of states of one kind or other was legion, and included one kingdom, Bohemia, several duchies, like those of Austria and Bavaria, and the secular electorates of Brandenburg, the Palatinate, and Saxony. The figurehead of this imperial complex was at this time Ludwig of Bavaria, who in 1314 had carried off the suffrages of the majority of the electors over Frederick of Habsburg, Duke of Austria. Out of this transaction arose a long civil war, for the dissentient electors clave to their candidate and set him up as rival King of the Romans, the title of the emperor-elect. In the bloody battle of Mühldorf on the Inn, John, Duke of Luxemburg and King of Bohemia, gained for Ludwig a decisive victory over his opponent, who was taken prisoner (1322). Ludwig repaid him ill for this great service, for on the death of the Markgraf of Brandenburg in the following year, he conferred the electorate on his own son, in violation of his promise to transfer it to King John. Henceforth the King of Bohemia passed over to the side of Ludwig's enemies, and thwarted him, secretly at least, if not always avowedly.

A more formidable antagonist than Duke Frederick then stepped into the lists in the person of Pope John XXII. Behind the Pope stood the French king, Charles IV., whose dream it was to unite the French and the imperial crowns on his own head. Since the death of Boniface VIII., whom Charles' father, Philip IV., had persecuted so bitterly, the

Popes resided at Avignon, and were the mere tools of their patrons, the Kings of France. John XXII., like his predecessor, Clement V., owed his election to the grace of the French Court, and submissively did its bidding. Avignon was but the shadow of Paris, the voice of the vicar of Christ none other than that of the most Christian king. Pope John's inspiration might be from above, but it came through the channel of Charles' cabinet. He accordingly summoned Ludwig to renounce his crown within three months on pain of excommunication (October 1323). Ludwig refused to recognise the right of the puppet Pope, *alias* the French king, to annul his election and to subscribe to the doctrine that the emperor was merely the papal vassal, and in the following year John thundered forth his ban and declared him deposed.

This high-handed encroachment on the rights of the empire led to a reconciliation with Duke Leopold of Habsburg, Frederick's brother, and his adherents, and Ludwig, thus strengthened, carried his defiance of the Pope to the extent of crossing the Alps and asserting his independence by getting himself crowned at Rome, and securing the election of an anti-pope, Nicolas V. (January-May 1328). John succeeded indeed in nullifying the effect of this bold stroke, as far as Italy was concerned, by disrupting the adherents of Ludwig, who was forced to beat a retreat across the Alps, and compelling Nicolas to beg forgiveness on his knees at Avignon. But all his efforts, backed by Philip's diplomacy, to oust Ludwig from his rights as emperor in Germany failed. In this policy his successor, Benedict XII., had no better success. Ludwig made humiliating

concessions, for he was by no means a forceful man or emperor, but nothing short of demission would satisfy his antagonists. In this interminable quarrel Edward was not slow to perceive his opportunity, and improve it in the interest of his ambition and his resentment.

The Bishop of Lincoln and his colleagues first sounded Count William of Hainault, Holland, and Zealand on the subject of an Anglo-Imperial confederation against Philip. Count William was most willing to serve his son-in-law; so were the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Gueldres, who was married to Edward's sister, the Marquis of Juliers, the Counts of Cleves and Namur, the Archbishops of Cologne and Maintz, the Markgraf of Brandenburg, and a whole host of lesser rank—glad to catch sight of English gold. Emperor Ludwig, too, Edward's brother-in-law by his marriage with Margaret, Queen Philippa's sister, was found most compliant at Frankfurt, where the Bishop of Lincoln waited on him in the beginning of July. Here was a chance of teaching Pope Benedict respect and King Philip repentance, with the prospect of a large money consideration to boot, of which his imperial majesty was most glad to take advantage. The basis of an alliance was speedily arranged, and with Ludwig's sanction an assembly of princely deputies, the imperial envoy among them, gathered at Valenciennes to firmly resolve on a confederation against Philip, Philip having meanwhile rebutted in high dudgeon a proposal made by his sister, the Countess of Hainault, in person, to submit his dispute with Edward to arbitration. The intercessory efforts of Pope Benedict, who would rather have seen the two monarchs

turn their arms against the infidel than against each other, were equally futile. His cardinals waited on Edward and Philip in vain. "Wherefore," continues our chronicler, "the princes of Germany came to a Parliament at Valenciennes, as had been agreed; . . . and there parliamented for the space of three weeks, the prelate and barons of England enlarging on the profit that would accrue to them from an alliance with the English king. Then came the Parliament to an end, the Germans protesting that, in the name of God, the King of England should straightway cross over to Antwerp for the purpose of holding a personal conference with them."²⁸

When we turn to Rymer for the matter-of-fact testimony of official documents as to this transaction, in regard to which Froissart is somewhat chaotic, though frightfully voluminous, we find a significant detail or two in explanation of the demonstrative earnestness of Edward's foreign friends. There is, for instance, a promise of £5,000 to the Markgraf of Juliers; another of £10,000 to the Duke of Brabant; an additional item in favour of the same for £60,000; 12,000 florins to the Count of Monte; two sums of 15,000 and 16,000 florins to Rupert, Count Palatine; 30,000 florins to the Count of Los; while the emperor's provisional share amounted to 300,000 florins.²⁹ For these handsome gratuities they undertook to place a certain number of men-at-arms at Edward's disposal in the forthcoming conflict, Ludwig's quota being two thousand men. In those days alliances were knocked down to the highest bidder, and as alliance merely meant, in the meantime, promises which cost but words, the Bishop

²⁸ Froissart, ii. 383-384.

²⁹ See Foedera, ii. 970, *et seq.*

of Lincoln did a roaring business. Should Philip afterwards come in and bid higher, there was nothing in the political morality of the time to prevent the Duke of Brabant from transferring his troth. If one royal bidder was fool enough to pay him to make war, why should not his antagonist pay him not to make it? Anything in the way of business was the political ethic of the age.

Not the least important part of his mission was to gain the adhesion of the Flemings to the Confederation. Flanders at this period comprehended three distinct subdivisions. There was French Flanders, which was a fief of the French crown; imperial Flanders, under the empire; and allodial Flanders, which held immediately of the count. The count was thus a vassal of France, a prince of the empire, and an independent petty sovereign in one.³⁰ For several centuries the territory which he ruled, in one or other of these capacities, had been pre-eminent as the centre of the wealth and elegance derived from a thriving industry and commerce. Ghent was the most populous city of Europe,³¹ and the poets and chroniclers vie with each other in their eulogiums of its splendour and its greatness. Bruges and Ypres formed with Ghent the Flemish Triad, and were scarcely less distinguished for their opulence and busy industry. This thriving industry had nurtured a spirit of independence, which had asserted itself in the privileges wrested from their counts, and jealously defended by these republican burghers. "God and Liberty"

³⁰ Voisin, *Examen Critique des Historiens de Jacques van Artevelde*, p. 49.

³¹ Jacques d'Artevelde, par M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, p. 25.

was the motto, which they were ever ready to maintain against their sovereign, in spite of the support of his powerful overlord the King of France. They had heroically vindicated it on the field of Courtrai in 1302, when the arrogant might of French chivalry was shattered by these doughty champions of municipal freedom. The victory of Cassel in 1328 avenged the disaster of Courtrai, but it failed to crush the independent spirit of the Flemings. Count Louis, unmindful of Philip's advice to mend his ways, followed it up by a cruel crusade against the vanquished, in the form of wholesale executions, tortures, confiscations, at Bruges and Ypres. The detestation of his tyrannic internal regime was intensified by his mischievous foreign policy. The mainspring of Flemish affluence lay in England, whence it drew the wool supply which its skilful weavers manufactured for the European market. Instead of cultivating the goodwill of Edward III., the count, as we have seen, took the side of his patron, King Philip. From the island of Cadsand, where he maintained a large garrison, his privateers issued forth to attack English traders. Still worse, he had the imprudence to imprison the English merchants in Flanders. Edward retaliated by prohibiting the export of English wool thither. This was equivalent to depriving the wealthy Flemish manufacturer and the industrious Flemish artisan of their means of subsistence. The citizens of Ghent talked open sedition against their count, who was in fact a pensioner of Philip, and found it more to his comfort to sojourn for the most part at Paris than among his rebellious subjects.

In these circumstances the English envoys were

heartily welcomed at Ghent, Bruges, and other towns, whither they made an excursion from Valenciennes, scattering florins and giving sumptuous dinners in passing. They directed their attentions particularly to Jacques d'Artevelde, one of those public-spirited Flemish burghers who played an important rôle in the immediate sequel of our story.

Artevelde was by no means the vulgar demagogue that Froissart and Villani represent.³² He was descended from one of those old patrician families of Ghent, which, unlike the feudal territorial aristocracy of the Middle Ages, took an active share in municipal affairs, and did not disdain to engage in industrial and mercantile pursuits. These wealthy burghers were the backbone of Flemish prosperity and freedom. Their opulence and their public spirit were a check upon the misgovernment of the counts and their despotic tendencies. The one lent force to the other, and in the patrician burgher, who united the rôle of citizen politician with that of cloth merchant and member of the guilds of the weavers and the brewers of Ghent, we see a very different personality from the vulgar demagogue of his detractors. Such was Jacques d'Artevelde, merchant and statesman, a man of enlightened public spirit and pugnacity, a patriot who had the material interest of his countrymen at heart, and worked for the realisation of a large national idea—the unity of the Low Countries—in the face of French aggression, the pusillanimous sycophancy of a Franco-ophile count, and the internal jealousies of the cities and states of the Netherlands.

³² For D'Artevelde, see the work of Lettenhove, Jacques d'Artevelde, referred to above, and Jacques van Artevelde, par P. A. Lentz.

In Jacques d'Artevelde the English ambassadors found a powerful co-operator, who discoursed to the folk of Ghent on the many advantages to be derived from a commercial alliance with the King of England. But a commercial alliance was impossible so long as their count was a satellite of King Philip, and lamed the sinews of their country's industry by his misgovernment and his hostility to Edward III. In laying the basis of such alliance, which might ere long develop into a political alliance as well, the envoys were completely successful. The count indeed strove hard to frustrate the movement.. He treacherously seized Sohier de Courtrai, Artevelde's father-in-law, and threw him into the castle of Rupelmonde (6th July 1337). He hired miscreants to attempt the assassination of D'Artevelde himself, who was too powerful to be openly attacked. These tactics only steeled the determination of the men of Ghent to cultivate more closely the protection of Edward III. When in November Edward sent Sir Walter de Manny with a fleet to attack the count's garrison in the island of Cadsand, he could reckon on the hearty support of this Anglophile party. Shortly after D'Artevelde crossed to England³³ to enlist his aid and to negotiate the re-establishment of the English wool trade. Edward conceded his request with all the more alacrity, inasmuch as he was confident that his generosity was but the preliminary

³³ Froissart, ii. 439-442, who is the only author who mentions this visit. For these events see the Flemish Chronicles in the collection *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, edited by J. de Smet, i. 210-211, 325-327, *et seq.* See also Lettenhove's D'Artevelde, pp. 45-56.

to an ultimate political alliance. In response Count Louis had the aged Sohier de Courtrai beheaded on his sick-bed in the dungeon of Rupelmonde, and at his and Philip's instigation the Pope placed the people of Ghent under his ban (March 1338). This terroristic action played still more into Artevelde's and Edward's hands,³⁴ for the men of Bruges, Ypres, and other towns made light of an ecclesiastical sentence that emanated from a Frenchified Pope, and united with those of Ghent in wresting from the count a declaration that he would maintain the liberties of Flanders.

After the question of allies the question of finance was the supremely important question, nay, it was the primary question, since the question of allies was purely a financial question. Some of the royal expedients at this time for raising money are curious.

One was for the king to turn merchant, buy so many sacks of wool, at a cheap rate, with the sanction of Parliament, sell them at a profit, and pocket the amount of such profit. It was the wool merchant whose gold florins inspired the confidence that was to undo Philip VI. It was the commerce of England, backing its prowess, that now made its potent influence felt in negotiation and war, as it was to do in more modern times. English industry and English daring were about to show what they could do for the national renown in the unhappy struggle in which England could not ultimately be the gainer, if France was at the outset to be the loser. The

³⁴ The formal conclusion of the treaty between the Bishop of Lincoln, as Edward's representative, and the commonalties of Flanders, is given in *Fœdera*, ii. 1042, and is dated 10th June 1338. The Flemings were granted free mercantile intercourse on condition of not assisting France or Scotland.

curt notice in the *Fœdera*³⁵ of 30,000 sacks of wool bought in 1337 on the king's account—for which his commission agents advanced £200,000—and of half the wool of the kingdom granted by Parliament the following year,³⁶ is significant of much more than a mere business transaction. From such items hung, to a considerable extent, the destiny of England and Western Europe. There were other means too of raising money at Edward's disposal, on which to fall back when the wool supply ran short; taxes in money, in the form of a fifteenth or a tenth; grants from the merchants,³⁷ with or without parliamentary sanction; grants of a tenth by Convocation;³⁸ exactions from Lombard and Jewish usurers; taxes on wool exported; monopolies, &c. So long as the war was popular, he could rely on a large revenue derived from these sources, and even when the tide of popularity ebbed, the prestige of the crown was sufficient to command what was only yielded with reluctance. For the present, the war fever was at inflammation point, and at Edward's injunction every pulpit rang with arguments or declamations in its support.³⁹

On the strength of this national backing, Edward took the momentous step, on the 6th October 1337, of formally assuming the title of King of France in a commission to the Duke of Brabant, whom he appointed his lieutenant and vicar-general in France, with power to take possession of the French king-

³⁵ ii. 989 (16th August 1337).

³⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 1022 (10th March 1338).

³⁷ See, for instance, *Fœdera*, ii. 1051.

³⁸ Bridlington author, p. 133; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 990.

³⁹ *Fœdera*, ii. 990, 994.

dom in his name.⁴⁰ His diplomacy for the next few months is, however, a tangle of inconsistencies, which reveal dubiety as to the feasibility of carrying out the project of uniting the crowns of England and France. Three days before he assumed the title of King of France, he commissioned the Bishop of Lincoln and the Earls of Northampton and Suffolk to negotiate a perpetual peace with Philip.⁴¹ The ambassadors were at the same time instructed to make overtures to Count Louis for a marriage between his daughter Joan and the count's eldest son.⁴² To the Pope he wrote to explain his reasons for the war with France and the alliance with Ludwig, whom his Holiness disowned; yet, in deference to the representations of the Papal Nuncios, Cardinals Bertrand and Peter, he agreed to an armistice with Philip till the 1st March 1338.⁴³

He did not, however, relax his preparations, in view of Philip's hostile action in Aquitaine and Scotland.⁴⁴ The two countries were in fact already at war. There had been skirmishes in Guienne, in the Channel, on the Flemish coast. English fleets were cruising in the North Sea, the Channel, and the Bay of Biscay, in readiness to repel or carry out an invasion. The North Sea fleet, under Sir Walter de Manny, made a dash at Cadsand on the 9th November 1337, and won the first victory of the war against the troops of Count Louis.⁴⁵ The victory intensified the war feeling in England, as well as added to the influence of Jacques d'Artevelde. Edward did not immediately break

⁴⁰ *Fœdera*, ii. 1000-1001.

⁴² *Ibid.*, ii. 998.

⁴⁴ Bridlington author, p. 135.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 998.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ii. 1004, 1007.

⁴⁵ Froissart, ii. 429-433.

the truce with Philip, however, and it was not till the middle of July 1338 that he appointed his eldest son, the Duke of Cornwall, regent in his absence, and, accompanied by the queen and a brilliant suite, set sail from Orwell, under convoy of a large fleet, carrying a copious force of archers and Welshmen,⁴⁶ for Antwerp, and followed by the prayers and processions of the Church for his success.⁴⁷ One of his last acts before going was to ratify the commercial treaty with Flanders, which guaranteed to the Flemings free commercial intercourse with England on condition of their not assisting Scotland or France.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Knighton, ii. 4.

⁴⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 1049, 1051; Bridlington author, pp. 135-138.

⁴⁸ *Fœdera*, ii. 1045.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE GREAT WAR (1338-1340).

EDWARD now took up the thread of the negotiations which his ambassadors had begun to spin in the Low Countries, relying on the sale of a large consignment of wool for the prompt despatch of this diplomatic business. The shrewd Flemings were delighted at the arrival of the royal wool merchant, come to woo their alliance with his wool ships. "They revered the wool sacks of the English more than the English themselves," as the chronicler¹ puts it. The wool sacks did not arrive in the expected abundance,² however, and there was much trepidation and much correspondence on this score for two months to come. Without his wool sacks Edward could not go on, for the Duke of Brabant and the Counts of Hainault, Gueldres, and Juliers, and other magnates of the Low Countries, who came to pay their respects at Antwerp, bargained anew for the lavish payment of their expenses.³ Unless these wool sacks put in an appearance straightway, his credit would sink below zero, and the grand confederation prepared by the Bishop

¹ *Chronicon Angliæ*, auctore Monacho quodam Sancti Albani, edited by Ed. Maunde Thompson, p. 6.

² On the 7th August we find him complaining that of the 20,000 sacks of wool, granted by Parliament, only 2,500 had arrived.

³ Murimuth, p. 84; cf. Bridlington author, p. 138.

of Lincoln would vanish like the mirage. Things began to look desperate, and Edward ultimately wrote to his commissioners to take it if they could not get it.⁴ This forceful method of doing business was apparently effective, for we hear no more of these delays for the present.

There were, however, delays of another kind to irritate the bellicose monarch. The Flemings, he discovered, would in the meantime not go beyond a commercial alliance and political neutrality as between the two antagonists, and Edward could only hope that the influence of D'Artevelde would ere long secure their active co-operation. He strove, in the same sanguine spirit, to gain the goodwill of the men of Brabant by conferring the same privilege of free mercantile intercourse on the burghers of Brussels, Louvain, Mechlin, and other Brabançon cities.⁵ This was so far satisfactory, but the shuffling ways of the petty potentates of the empire were past comprehension. So long as Edward was on the other side of the North Sea, and promises were paid so handsomely, the emperor was ready to swear everlasting alliance. Now that he was on the spot, and meant serious business, there was general hesitation. "I have been ill-advised to put my hand to such a business,"⁶ exclaimed he in disgust to the Bishop of Lincoln. Slippery Brabant was in fact playing a double game, and the dubious example of so potent a magnate was disastrous. Philip had taken due note of these trottings of the English envoys through the Low Countries, and set in motion an undercurrent of

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 1054.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 1058.

⁶ Knighton, ii. 5.

counter intrigues. After much parliamentation at Antwerp and Hal, Edward discovered, in consequence, a general disinclination for prompt enterprise, the result being to refer the question of an active alliance to the emperor, as a convenient pretext for staying action.⁷ There was nothing for it but to journey eastwards, towards the end of August, in search of his brother-in-law, Ludwig.

On Sunday, the 23rd of August—a red-letter day in the annals of the old Rhenish city—he entered Cologne⁸ at the head of his magnificent retinue, to find a regal welcome awaiting him in the crowded streets, and hospitality in the house of a wealthy burgher, Heinrich Scherfgin. Cologne was at that time the centre of a thriving commerce with England, and arrayed itself in festive garb all the more heartily on this account, as it had done a century and a half earlier to celebrate the arrival of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, freed from his Austrian prison. From far and near the chivalry of Germany came to join in the demonstrations of the good, opulent burghers, and offer tributes of their respect in the form of costly presents. In return, Edward distributed, with lavish hand, gifts to many of the churches, and enhanced the building fund of the great cathedral with a princely donation. There was feasting and quaffing of bumpers of Rhine wine, in right capacious German fashion, and music by fiddler Franz, specially told off to entertain the royal ears with sweet German airs.

⁷ Froissart, i. 448-456.

⁸ There is an account of Edward's journey compiled from the Wardrobe Book in Dr Pauli's *Pictures of Old England*, pp. 151-159.

All the following day Cologne gave itself up to this intoxication of public rejoicing, so dear then, as now, to the light-hearted Rhinelander.⁹ On Tuesday, Edward, eager for business, hurried off to Bonn, to be welcomed in sumptuous fashion by Archbishop Walram in the hall of the archiepiscopal palace. From Bonn to Coblenz the journey was continued by boats up the Rhine, the festive demonstrations of the enthusiastic Rhinelanders breaking out at every convenient landing-place, and delaying the progress of the gay flotilla, which only reached Coblenz on Monday, the 31st August. Here again there was a magnificent reception—this time an imperial welcome—barges in splendid bunting, and resounding with the blast of trumpet and bugle blown by the imperial minstrels, coming forth to greet him, when the grand falconer presented him with a live eagle as a fitting tribute to so chivalrous a monarch. Thereafter followed the landing and the effusive greeting of the brothers-in-law in the castle (let us suppose) of festive old Coblenz, where the wine of the Moselle and the Rhine ever ensure good fellowship, and bid nations and men forget their sorrows and their enmities.

Then to business on the morrow and following days, during which the Reichstag sat in anxious conclave to deliberate on the welfare of the distressed Fatherland, so long torn by civil dissension, with special reference to the hostility of the King of France and his French Pope, Benedict XII., and to

⁹ There is doubtless a reminiscence of these pleasant days at Cologne in the official document in which Edward, on the 18th September, confirmed the privileges granted by his predecessors to the inhabitants of Cologne (*Fœdera*, ii. 1059)

conclude in favour of alliance with Philip's enemy, Edward of England. Ludwig obligingly agreed to defy Philip of Valois on the ground of his encroachments on the rights of the empire in the frontier district of Cambrai, and his usurpation of the French crown (France being still assumed to be a fief of the empire), and to commit the task of punishing him to Edward as his vicar-general. The ceremony of investiture was performed with imposing pomp in the market-place of Coblenz. On a throne placed on a richly-draped scaffold, twelve feet high, sat Ludwig, clad in the imperial purple, the double crown on his head, a globe of gold, surmounted by the cross, in his right hand, the sceptre in his left. One step below sat Edward in full regal splendour, still lower the electors present, likewise in magnificent official robes. On the emperor's right stood the Margrave of Meissen, as guardian of the globe of gold; on his left the Margrave of Juliers, the guardian of the sceptre; while Lord Otto Cuyt, representing the absent Duke of Brabant, held the sword of state over his head. The occasion was honoured by a vast assembly of lesser magnates—dukes, archbishops, bishops, counts, barons, knights, seventeen thousand in all, say the chroniclers,¹⁰—which thronged the market-place to overflowing. The herald having enjoined silence, the ceremony began with the proclamation of a number of laws relative to the affairs of the empire. Then spoke the emperor, declaring the disloyalty, perfidy, and cowardice of Philip of Valois, for which he defied him, and declared him to have forfeited the protection of the empire. Next he handed to Edward a gold wand, and his commission as imperial vicar

¹⁰ Knighton, ii. 5.

over the territory from Cologne westwards. He thus virtually abdicated in his favour the imperial sovereignty over the Low Countries for the space of seven years, and placed the feudal levies at his disposal for aggressive purposes—at least on parchment. Which parchment the magnates concerned, the emperor leading off, swore to observe, after hearing mass said by the Archbishop of Cologne in the principal church on the morrow. Not only did they oblige themselves in this solemn fashion to assist him in the war against France for seven years, they undertook to punish any recalcitrant member of the league, and to hold themselves in readiness to march to the rendezvous at his summons.¹¹ This looked like business at last, and Edward must have accounted the expenditure of the vast sums he had lavished on the imperial magnates at Coblenz, and by the way thither, a most promising investment. Next spring would witness the triumphant vindication of his right to the French crown at the head of the united forces of England and the empire. With this exhilarating confidence he set out on his return journey to Antwerp, where he spent the winter.

In virtue of his new dignity he convened the princes of the Netherlands, first at Malines and afterwards at Herck,¹² to make known, with befitting ceremonial, his appointment and his powers as the emperor's plenipotentiary in these parts, and to claim their active assistance. All, with the exception of the Bishop of Liege, who stubbornly absented him-

¹¹ Knighton, ii. 5 and 6, who gives a circumstantial account of these proceedings; Froissart, ii. 463-469.

¹² Knighton, ii. 2-6; Froissart, ii. 471-474. From the *Fœdera*, ii. 1054, we learn that he was at Malines on the 18th September.

self, professed their hearty acquiescence, and agreed to begin hostilities at the commencement of the following summer—for the reconquest of Cambrai in the first place. At the same time the Count of Gueldres, in the name of the emperor, summoned the count and the cities of Flanders to join in the enterprise, promising, on the part of Edward, various benefits as temptations so to do. Edward, as King of France and feudal superior of Flanders, would guarantee an improved coinage—florins, *Louis d'Or's* of the time of St Louis; would revive and keep inviolate the good usages and customs of the country, to the profit of the industrial guilds; would establish in Flanders the staple of wool; would assist the Flemings to reconquer Lille, Douay, and Bethune; would redress all grievances imposed by former French kings, and otherwise ensure the liberties and prosperity of the country.¹³ These assurances were thrown away upon the count, who preferred his pleasant exile at Paris to alliance with Edward, while his cautious subjects, who had chased him once more across the French frontier,¹⁴ still hesitated to go the length of an active alliance.

Edward's vicarship was an expensive dignity, and unfortunately he had returned from Coblenz with sorely depleted purse, and was feeling keenly the pinch of poverty. Shortly after his departure from England he had made an urgent appeal to Parliament, which met at Northampton¹⁵ in the end of

¹³ This document is given by Lettenhove in a note to Froissart, ii. 548-551.

¹⁴ Knighton, ii. 7.

¹⁵ Murimuth, p. 85; Knighton, ii. 4-5; cf. *Fœdera*, pp. 1051-1053. According to Murimuth, this does not seem to have been a full Parliament, as he only speaks of barons and prelates attending it, and calls it "a certain council or parliament."

July, for another wool grant. This was the first of many such unpleasant reminders that the country must pay for the privilege of being ruled by a martial, ambitious monarch, but as yet there was no grumbling except by the chroniclers,¹⁶ and the response of Parliament was both prompt and generous. It assessed each town in 140 lbs. of wool for each twenty shillings' worth of taxable property.¹⁷ No wonder that honest Murimuth, who is a better exponent of public feeling than the courtly official scribes of the day, took to grumbling in the safe quiet of his cell, since the number of sacks furnished by the counties of Leicester, Lincoln, and Northampton alone amounted to 1,211. Convocation followed this patriotic example, and at a meeting at London on the 1st October, conceded a tenth in addition to the two already granted. Many of the members gave large sums besides, in lieu of military service.¹⁸ But it refused to contribute a quota of wool,¹⁹ and the clergy of the province of York only joined their brethren of the south, in assessing themselves with the additional tenth,²⁰ after considerable pressure from the Council. Henceforth Edward could not reasonably ascribe his embarrassments to the stinginess of his subjects, but, to his mortification, there were again delays in the despatch of the wool ships, which lay month after month in large numbers at Harwich, ready to sail for Flanders. Contrary winds and the fear of the French privateers kept Edward on the rack of expectation throughout the winter.²¹ During these dreary months he lived on

¹⁶ Murimuth, p. 85.

¹⁸ Knighton, ii. 5.

²⁰ *Fœdera*, ii. 1069.

¹⁷ Knighton, ii. 4.

¹⁹ Murimuth, p. 85.

²¹ Murimuth, pp. 87-88.

credit—by no means a pleasant existence for a bellicose king, with large schemes of conquest on hand. He borrowed, on the security of these dilatory wool ships in Harwich harbour, large sums from the merchants of Flanders and Brabant,²² from Italian bankers²³—Nicolas Bartholomew of Lucca, and the companies of Peruch and Bardi of Florence—and even from some of his allies. Nay, he was reduced to the last resort of impecuniosity, to pawn his jewels to these greedy merchants and bankers, and his very crown, to Archbishop Baldwin of Treves.²⁴

There were diplomatic worries, too, to aggravate his financial troubles. Philip was working hard to ward off the impending blow by counter intrigues with the princes of the empire. Brabant was still poisoning the political scales in secret, and Philip was doing his utmost to adjust them in his favour. He schemed to get rid of Van Artevelde by assassination, cunningly concocted, but happily impossible of realisation.²⁵ He succeeded in keeping the Duke of Lorraine, the Count of Bar, the King of Bohemia, and the Bishops of Metz and Liege outside the net of Edward's intrigues, and secured the mercenary alliance of the Genoese. He planned, too, a second Norman conquest, which his son John, Duke of Normandy, was to direct at the head of a formidable Norman fleet and army.²⁶ Most potent of all, he could with effect make use of the Church as a poli-

²² *Fœdera*, ii. 1081; cf. ii. 1060.

²³ *Ibid.*, ii. 1081.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 1073; cf. ii. 1088.

²⁵ *Froissart*, ii. 420-422.

²⁶ The treaty between Philip and the Norman barons for the invasion of England did not come to light till eight years afterwards, during the sack of Caen, in 1346, when we shall notice it more particularly. It was concluded in March 1338.

tical agent—a rôle which the Church, at least at Avignon and Rome, and other places besides, has unfortunately ever been subservient enough to fill. Why should not Pope Benedict XII., his *alter ego* of Avignon, do him a serviceable stroke by damning the Anglo-Imperial alliance? Divine inspiration in those days coming by way of Paris, Pope Benedict set to work to show Edward in particular and the world in general that the language of heaven in the year of grace 1338 (13th November), if not classic Latin, was at least rich in good round expletives. He indited a letter to the King of England in vilification of Ludwig and denunciation of the impious alliance with an usurper whom his predecessor had consigned to perdition.²⁷ The Pope swore to some purpose. If his epistle did not overawe Edward, it apparently made him reflect on the advisability (finances being at such low ebb) of tacking diplomatically in the direction of attempting to negotiate an understanding with Philip at the last moment. At all events he commissioned his ambassadors, a month later,²⁸ to treat with him for an accommodation, and even empowered them to address him as King of France! Philip rebutted these overtures. "Edward shall never have so much as a handbreadth of land in my kingdom," was his spirited reply in answer to the representations of the Archbishop of Canterbury for a compromise. He could for the nonce afford to indulge in this peremptory language. The papal swearing had produced a still greater impression on the pious Ludwig, and Philip had improved the occasion to beget a coolness be-

²⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 1063.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 1068 (15th December); cf. Knighton, ii. 7.

tween the emperor and the English monarch.²⁹ In a passing access of nervousness at the threat of renewed excommunication, Ludwig renounced his treaty obligations.³⁰

On the strength of this momentary diplomatic advantage, Philip waxed aggressive.³¹ He fortified the frontier towns of Artois and Vermandois, garrisoned the northern seaports to protect them from the English cruisers, and fitted out several fleets, commanded by Charles Grimaldi, Admiral of France, Hue Quieret, Nicolas Behucet, and the Genoese Barbavera, and manned by Breton, Norman, and Genoese sailors.³² Late in the autumn of 1338, Quieret landed at Southampton, while the unsuspecting inhabitants were at church, set fire to the town, pillaged shops and houses, violated the women and girls, murdered their husbands and fathers, and finally made off before the men of Winchester, Salisbury, and other towns could arrive to the rescue. In the following spring and early summer these privateering squadrons renewed their attacks all round the coast from Harwich to Bristol, burning Plymouth, Hastings, Rye, and capturing or burning a number of English merchantmen, before their audacious attacks were punished in a stiff fight by Hugh de Courtenay, Earl of Devon,³³ and paid back by the burning of Boulogne. On land, too, Philip forestalled his antagonist by marching an army into Gascony, and thus deprived him of the honour of

²⁹ Knighton, ii. 7.

³⁰ In the *Les Gestes des Ducs de Brabant*, par Jean de Klerk (edited by Willems), this breach of treaty is ascribed to the delay by Edward in the payment of his subsidy.

³¹ Knighton, ii. 7-8.

³² Froissart, ii. 427-429.

³³ Murimuth, pp. 89-90; Knighton, ii. 8-9.

the initiative in the gigantic conflict which was to last throughout the greater part of Edward's reign, and indeed of the century. The smoke of burning English coast towns brought home to the men of England, in rude, humiliating fashion, the fact that the farce of pen-and-ink warfare had given place to the bloody tragedy of bitter international strife. "The news," says Froissart, greatly delighted at the prospect of the shock of armies and the doughty deeds of his valorous knights, "spread throughout England, how the Normans had been at Southampton, and burned and pillaged it. Whereby the English were made aware that war had broken out between England and France."³⁴

Very galling to English insular pride, yet very opportune for Edward, who could now appeal to wounded patriotism to furnish him with ample supplies. His English men-at-arms and archers—a magnificent body of twelve thousand picked men—were encamped at Vilvoorden, near Brussels, chafing like their monarch at the news, cursing their impecuniosity and his, and waiting impatiently for their allies. July came, and still there was no sign of a forward movement—nothing better, in the form of movement, than the endless trotings of envoys with urgent messages to these dilatory potentates of the western empire to advance in the name of God and St. George. If not, in the name of Dives then, but Dives was not at present one of England's divine patrons, Edward, according to Murimuth, "still expecting his Teutonic confederates and the money destined from England." The emperor, moreover, was still troubled in conscience,

and holding back, for fear of Avignon thunder; and the Duke of Brabant as hesitating as ever in his private meditations at Brussels. July passed in this distracting procrastination, and August came (Edward borrowing hard meanwhile, and labouring to convince the Pope and the cardinals that his claim to be King of France was indisputable³⁵), before Ludwig pledged his troth anew,³⁶ and Brabant decided for action. Even then it was September before his dilatory friends, the emperor's son, Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, among them, arrived for conference at Vilvoorden with their armed retinues, and finally agreed to join in Edward's defiance of Philip of Valois, King of France, so called, as the preliminary of an immediate movement on Cambrai. With this allied defiance the Bishop of Lincoln was despatched to Paris, and the army struck its tents at last, and took the road after him.

Now for the march, patient reader, with plenty of fighting, "beautiful feats of arms," which rejoice the heart of old Froissart, in store, doubtless—Walter de Manny leading the way, eager to be the first to distinguish himself on this, as on many subsequent occasions. The valorous Walter made a dash on Mortagne on the Scheldt—four leagues from Tournay—which some of his men entered in the garb of peasants, carrying butter and cheese to market. The porter secure, Walter and his braves rushed in, but the sentry at the castle gate was on the alert, and the castle was not to be had. But there was plenty of booty to be gathered before setting fire

³⁵ See letter in *Fœdera*, ii. 1086; cf. Murimuth, the Bridlington author, and Hemingburgh, who give the letter in full.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1088.

to the houses and retiring. At Thun l'Eveque, a stronghold on the west bank of the same river, Sir Walter was more fortunate, taking not only the castle, but the castellan in his bed. Encouraging augury to Edward, who by this time was in hot march from Valenciennes Cambrai-wards, with plenty to feed his twenty thousand Anglo-Imperialists, or thereabout, by the way, for the harvest had just been gathered, and the villages were well stored with corn and fruit, for which the English paid honourably, but to which the Germans, "being bad payers," helped themselves at the expense of the owners. Once on the Bishop of Cambrai's territory, payment was superfluous, and the work of "looting," well becoming a fighting gentleman in those days, commenced.

Thus burning and plundering up to the walls of Cambrai, Edward, on the 20th September, drew his lines round the stout old episcopal city on the Upper Scheldt, and summoned its bishop, William d'Auxonne, to surrender forthwith to the vicar of the emperor. Bishop William, a choleric, valorous prelate, answered with a brave ecclesiastical volley—in other words, would see Edward, his brother-in-law, young Count William of Hainault (who had succeeded his father in June 1337), and the rest of them damned first—, launched his interdict against the sacrilegious invader to this intent, and prepared, moreover, to fight with carnal weapons, like a model fourteenth-century prelate. In these circumstances the arrival of Brabant, at the head of twenty thousand men, was very opportune. Nevertheless a simultaneous assault on three gates of the city—those of Douai, Robert, and St Quentin—was beaten off after a whole day's hard fighting, during which

Walter de Manny, John Chandos, esquire, the Earl of Salisbury, and young Count William signalled their prowess by "beautiful feats of arms." But feats of chivalry would not batter down the defiant walls of Cambrai, and the treason of a citizen, who had undertaken to let down one of the drawbridges, being discovered by the miraculous ringing of the cathedral bells, at the critical moment (says Froissart), Cambrai was not to be had by stealth or valour. October was at hand, with gaunt winter in its wake; Philip, too, was gathering his host at Peronne, intent on rescue; the country round Cambrai was already eaten up. Edward, therefore, resolved to raise the siege and cross the French frontier into Vermandois, which he did on the 25th September at Marcoing,³⁷ in quest of supplies, and of more splendid achievement than the recovery of a stolen imperial fief. At this point the Counts of Hainault and Namur professed their inability to violate the territory of their liege lord (they held fiefs in France), proclaimed in fact their feudal obligation to transfer their arms to Philip, and marched off in the most amicable fashion to take the other side.

Philip was speedily apprised of his progress by the smoke of burning villages and homesteads on the distant horizon towards the east, which heralded the sinister activity of the Anglo-Imperial foraging parties. Roused by the murmurs of the populace,³⁸ he sent forward detachments to strengthen the garrisons in the towns on Edward's route, and moved with the main body eastwards to St Quentin, de-

³⁷ Foedera, ii. 1091, where we find him from the 26th September to the 4th October.

³⁸ Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 164.

terminated apparently to remain on the defensive in the hope of wearing out his antagonist by a lengthy autumn campaign. Edward was meanwhile cautiously feeling his way south-eastwards, pillaging and skirmishing *en route*, notably at the Abbey of Honnecourt, whose bellicose abbot himself took post at the barriers, and maintained a desperate combat with young Henry of Flanders, newly knighted by Edward, and eager to distinguish himself in the fray. The doughty abbot was too much for the young knight, and not only successfully defended the barriers, but captured Sir Henry's sword, and would have taken him prisoner, had not his men pulled him back covered with wounds. Foiled first by a bishop and then by an abbot, of hot martial temperament, in spite of his forty thousand men (reinforcements having meanwhile come up), and with such patriotic bishops and abbots in his path, caution was necessary. The papal emissaries were busy, too, with the task of negotiation,³⁹ in the hope of frustrating a battle, while his movements were hampered by the reluctance of the Duke of Brabant to continue the march, owing to the lateness of the season, and the growing dearth of provisions. Not till the 16th October, three weeks after crossing the French frontier, did he reach the Oise, at Origny-Sainte-Benoite, a short distance eastward from St Quentin, and here Brabant and his fellow-allies flatly refused to budge further. Edward offered in vain to place his own supplies at their disposal,⁴⁰ when on the morrow, the 17th,⁴¹ a challenge to pitched battle on the following Thursday or Friday

³⁹ Hemingburgh, ii. 341.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Fœdera, ii. 1093.

on fair ground—"not impeded by wood, marsh, or water"—opportunistically came from Philip to revive their ardour.

Bending eastwards into the county of Thierasche, he halted on Thursday, the 21st, near Flamengerie, to await the approach of Philip, who had taken post at Buironfosse, about a couple of leagues distant. The two armies being thus within range—an ugly-looking ravine between them—Edward sent a herald on the morrow to bid his antagonist come out to battle on the following day. Philip acquiesced,⁴² and on Friday, the 22nd October, Froissart shows us the Anglo-Imperial army standing in splendid array—"well and skilfully ordered"—in three "battles" or divisions,⁴³ with a fourth in reserve, banners and pennons fluttering in the breeze, the tunics of the knights, emblazoned with their coats of arms, heightening the brilliance of their shining armour—withal an imposing and picturesque spectacle, which long years afterwards delights the fancy of the graphic chronicler of chivalry. Both men-at-arms and archers were on foot, horses and baggage being collected in a wood to the rear. Edward's plan evidently was here, as afterwards at Crecy, to fight a defensive battle in which his archers could make their terrible superiority felt with better effect. As at Halidon Hill, six years before, he took care to lay on the enemy the disadvantage of crossing that ugly ravine in front in order to attack him, and the

⁴² Hemingburgh, ii. 345.

⁴³ Ibid., ii. 346-347. In the report to Parliament, convened in October 1339, the number of Edward's army is stated to be "15,000 holmes et plus et poeple saunz noubre" (Rot. Par., ii. 103).

cool wariness which could make the best of a position and of the forces at his command betrayed once more the great commander. Confident of victory, he rode along the front of the battles gaily saluting his commanders, and lending the supreme touch of *éclat* to this old-world picture of military display. Every eye radiated the enthusiasm of the moment, and in his ardour for the shock, Brabant offered a reward of a thousand florins to any of his followers who should bring him but a hand-breadth of Philip's standard, the oriflamme of France.⁴⁴ "And thus they stood, waiting till the French had ordered themselves a similar array."⁴⁵

Philip could boast an army even more resplendent in rank and numbers. The Kings of Bohemia, Navarre, and Scotland were there. There, too, were six dukes—Normandy, Brittany, Lorraine, Bourbon, Athenes, and Burgundy, who arrived on the field with his brave Burgundians just in time; thirty-six counts, Count William of Hainault and "Count Douglas of Scotland" among them; knights bannerets to the number of 227, 560 pennons, 4,000 chevaliers, and 60,000 footmen. Glorious parade, which even yet stirs the emotions of our epic poet in prose as he writes—"It was a thing of exceeding beauty to see the banners waving in the wind, the horses mailed and caparisoned down to the haunches, knights and esquires in shining armour. Yea, nothing could vie with it in magnificence."⁴⁶ And yet there is no battle to record, much to the sorrow of our chronicler, who would fain set them a-fighting, as he writes, battle or no battle. Alas! one of the

⁴⁴ Hemingburgh, p. 347.

⁴⁵ Froissart, iii. 42.

⁴⁶ Ibid., iii. 53.

finest chances of battle throe and carnage, and "beautiful deeds of arms," lost at the last moment! So much shining armour made to resound with lusty blows; men-at-arms, archers, spearmen in expectant readiness on either side; heaven and earth holding their breath, watching for the wild charge, and the piles of dead and dying men, and the hoarse roar of battle, and yet not a drop of bloodshed! Froissart is inconsolable. "One cannot but greatly marvel how such fine warriors could depart without giving each other battle, but the French were not of one accord (Philip having called a council of war, at which there was hot strife of tongues—all the fighting that was done that day), some saying that it would be a great shame and dishonour not to fight when the enemies of the king were drawn up in their presence, in his very kingdom. Others said that it would be a great pity to fight, for if fortune were adverse, the king would run the risk of losing his kingdom; if he were victorious, he would, nevertheless, not gain the kingdom of England or the territories of the English king's allies." Thus the morning passed in debate, when about noontide shouts resounded from the French ranks. "To arms! to arms!" ran the cry along the lines. Now for the shock! Death or victory! William of Hainault hastily dubs a dozen of his chevaliers knights on the spot! Alas! the enemy that has set the whole French host in such violent commotion is not the battles of the English tyrant, but a couple of frightened hares scurrying through the foremost ranks, and rousing the battle fury of those behind, which mistake the noisy comedy in front for the onset of the English! The hares being put to the

rout, Count William's newly dubbed knights—Knights of the Order of the Hare as their companions derisively hail them—had their valour tested in the fire of chaff, of which they were the sorry objects. Finally, as if farce must succeed farce on this ridiculous day, one of Philip's counsellors bethought himself of the prophecy of a certain astrologer—no less a person than King Robert of Sicily. King Robert's horoscope, it would appear, had foreshadowed victory to Edward, defeat to Philip in the coming strife of nations, and the remembrance of this sinister destiny deprived the inconsolable chronicler of the pleasure of recording a great battle and history of what would probably (Edward's terrible archers having their trusty bows ready strung) have been an anticipation of Crecy. Thus it came about that both armies preferred to stand on the defensive all through that Friday and the next day, Saturday, Philip meanwhile entrenching his camp for fear of attack. In the evening they vanished from the scene of this grand parade—Philip, who lost a thousand horsemen in a marsh in his haste to be off out of range of the English archers, to St Quentin; Edward, northwards to Avesnes, where he waited till Monday, in the vain hope that his antagonist would give him another chance, and thence to Brussels—as if spirited away by the wand of some enchanter, hostile to the god of battles. The god of battles will yet have his revenge!⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For an account of this campaign see primarily Edward's letter to the Duke of Cornwall descriptive of his march, *Fœdera*, ii. 1094; Avesbury, pp. 304-306; Murimuth, pp. 101-103; Knighton, pp. 10-13; Hemingburgh, ii. 340-348, who gives Philip's

An unsuccessful siege and a grand parade, simultaneous with a plundering expedition against the coasts of Normandy, conducted by Robert de Morley,⁴⁸ was a poor feat for an army of forty thousand men, collected with such infinite labour of negotiation, and such heavy outlay. The failure of the campaign would have paralysed the energies of a weaker man, and saved Western Europe from further calamity, on the score of this problematic ambition to unite the crowns of France and England. Edward was too strong a king to abandon his projects, even with the failure of the attempted conquest of Scotland, to accentuate the necessity of curbing his imperialism. He took his claim to the French crown in all seriousness, firmly believing that he had been unjustly deprived of his own by an usurper. There can be no doubt of the sincerity of his conviction—nay, it was the strength of this conviction that made him deaf to every argument on the other side. King of France he would be, King of Scotland too in good time, even if he must appeal again and again to the tribunal of force, and with extraordinary persistence he returned to Antwerp only the more determined to compass his end. He would weave such a web of alliances as should leave no loophole of escape to Philip from his irrevocable purpose to disinherit and dethrone him. The Flemings in particular must be persuaded actively to espouse his cause, and the Flemings, it appeared

letter of challenge and Edward's reply; Froissart, iii. 7-62; Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 164-165, who represents Edward as taking to flight, being overawed by superior numbers. He was evidently disinclined to begin the battle, at all events.

⁴⁸ Knighton, ii. 10.

(thanks to the manipulation of Van Artevelde), were now prepared, on their own terms indeed, to enter into an active political alliance. If Edward would formally assume the title of King of France, quarter the French arms with those of England as a pledge of his irrevocable determination to prosecute the quarrel to the bitter end, would shield them from the consequences of excommunication by the French Pope, would undertake to restore the towns filched from Flanders by his French progenitors, they would swear allegiance to him as King of France, and help to win his cause. Such were the preliminaries agreed on by Edward and Van Artevelde as the basis of a conference to be held at Ghent with the representatives of the Flemish cities. Thither he accordingly repaired in January 1340, accompanied by the Duke of Brabant, the Margraves of Gueldres, Juliers, and Breda, John of Hainault, and others. Amid much demonstration of popular goodwill the preliminaries were transformed into a treaty. The shrewd Flemings at the same time took care to drive a good commercial bargain, and to stipulate that Flanders should preserve the monopoly of the English wool export and be guaranteed free circulation for its manufactured woollens in England. The interests of the English wool-grower were sacrificed to the weavers of Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges. Moreover, the transaction made itself unpleasantly felt in the pocket of the English taxpayer by the stipulation that Edward should pay £140,000 to his new allies. He improved the opportunity to draw Flanders into closer relations with Brabant, and to cement the alliance with the duke by a treaty which engaged each to render

mutual aid during the continuance of the war.⁴⁹ He even made overtures to the Count of Flanders. Let Count Louis approve these admirable transactions for the benefit of his dominions, in his enforced absence at Paris, discard Philip for Edward as liege lord, and he would regain for him the allegiance of his subjects, and provide in addition a wife for his eldest son in the person of his daughter Isabella! Very condescending, doubtless, but the count could not be brought to feel his indebtedness to Edward as his self-appointed vicegerent and superior, and declined.

The sequel shows Edward in a still more self-sacrificing attitude. He would relieve Philip himself of the burden of a crown, which he was never born to wear, and dismiss him into private life by a proclamation that he had ceased to reign, and that Providence had vested the government of the French nation in Edward's unworthy person. Of this fact he gave solemn notice at Ghent, on the 8th February 1340, to the people of France, to the Flemings, yea, to the universe (*Universis, Rex*), in a number of declarations and letters patent.⁵⁰ He had by this time so conclusively persuaded himself of his right to succeed Charles IV. as the nearest male of the blood—the main point of his contention these three years back—that it had become a self-evident argument. Needless to say, he had been a very ill-used man, had suffered untold injuries at the hands of

⁴⁹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1097 (15th November 1339) and 1106 (4th January 1340). For these transactions see also Lettenhove, *Jacques d'Artevelde*, pp. 67-71. There were three distinct treaties with the Flemings, the substance of which is given in the text; cf. *Oudegherst, Chroniques et Annales de Flandres*, pp. 264-266.

⁵⁰ See *Fœdera*, ii. 1108-1111.

Philip, had shown magnanimous patience in spite of these repeated provocations. Was not Philip an arch-deceiver, a subtle, smooth-tongued traitor, playing with all his offers of accommodation, intent upon upsetting his schemes, cheating him in Aquitaine, entrapping him into that vile act of homage while he was still a minor, playing the devil with his little game of subduing those rebellious Scots, trying to throw him off the scent with his crusade project, the rascal? That these villainous Scots are rebels against their liege lord, and not patriots, is self-evident too. The Kings of England had, from the very beginning of time, been overlords of Scotland,⁵¹ and only that sacrilegious and perjured tyrant, Robert Bruce, had dared to question the fact. In virtue of these self-evident truths, Edward had taken upon himself the government of France, and hereby promised to govern it in accordance with "the good laws and customs of St Louis"; to eschew the exactions of his predecessors and other evil ways of tyrants; to preserve the liberties and privileges of the people, especially of Holy Church, and to have recourse to the advice of peers, nobles, prelates, and wise men in matters of legislation and administration.

All which the critical historian finds it hard to take seriously. The argument that the crown should go to the male heir nearest in blood might be a plausible one, but the representatives of the French people had decreed otherwise, and had preferred Philip as the nearest male heir by the Salic Law. This choice Edward had explicitly recognised as valid

⁵¹ Cum semper Reges Angliæ fuerint superiores Domini Scotiæ.

(his recognition being, by the way, a matter of no importance to the French people), not merely as a minor, but after he had taken the reins of government into his own hands. To disown his own act on the ground of political friction and wrongdoing (not all on one side) was a very questionable procedure. The Flemings might take him and his arguments seriously, the English wool trade being at stake, but the critical historian, not being interested in English wool sacks, must dismiss his case as, at least not proven. To be sure, Edward was half a Frenchman; he spoke the language of the people whose crown he claimed; French nationality was only in its first stage of growth, and the French language was the official language of England. But France had its traditions as well as England, and the antagonism brought out at Buironfosse and in the burning of English and French seaport towns, made it clear that France was not minded to be ruled by an alien monarch. In view of this fact these unconscionable declarations and letters patent are simply farcical. Anyhow, Edward was determined to keep up the farce in grim earnest, and proceeded to quarter the arms of France with those of England, and to engrave the device, "Dieu et mon Droit,"⁵² on his new escutcheon. Thereafter he betook himself across the North Sea⁵³ to raise the money necessary for the practical realisation of his self-imposed dignity, leaving the Earls of Suffolk and Salisbury as pledges for the payment of his already enormous debts.

⁵² Knighton, ii. 14.

⁵³ He arrived at Orwell on the 21st February (Foëdera, ii. 1115)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OF SLUYS AND THE SIEGE OF TOURNAY (1340).

ENGLAND had meanwhile been waiting with impatient expectation for some decisive result from the protracted absence of its king in foreign parts. It had been kept on the rack by the fear of a Scottish invasion, and by the depredations of the French cruisers in the Channel. War on the Continent in those days meant war in England itself, the Scottish border being practically, in virtue of the Franco-Scottish alliance, the frontier between England and France. If Edward entered France, the Scots would almost certainly enter England.¹ Those were not the comfortable days when Englishmen could engage in a foreign war, with the conviction that, though it might cost money, it would not entail disagreeable acquaintance at home with its miseries. The men of the northern counties might awake any morning to see the smoke of burning homesteads on the northern horizon. England was therefore in an excited, anxious mood, and restive for news of decisive action on Edward's part. At length, in October, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Durham arrived to report to Parliament that Edward had got his allies in marching order, had crossed the French frontier,

¹ See Rot. Par., ii. 103.

and was hopeful of great things. But operations had suffered from want of money. He was already deep in debt, had, in fact, incurred obligations for the enormous sum of (for that time) £300,000, and the honour of England being at stake, Parliament must forthwith come to the rescue. Whereupon the Lords promptly offered an aid of the tenth sheaf, fleece, and lamb (to be paid in two years), coupled with a protest against the maletôte or wool tax recently imposed.² The Commons were more cautious. As the exigencies of the case required an extraordinary subsidy, they must first consult their constituents, and would meanwhile do their utmost to persuade them to be liberal.³ Public opinion was evidently becoming an appreciable factor in legislation, especially when it touched the pocket of the taxpayer, and Edward must therefore wait till the taxpayer had decided whether to pay his debts or not. For this purpose the regent must order a new election.

Parliament accordingly met on the 20th January 1340, and after a month's deliberation, the Commons offered thirty thousand sacks of wool. A notable tribute to English public spirit, since it meant serious sacrifice to the English wool-grower and others, from which Philip VI. might take warning that the English wool-grower, with a popular king on the throne, had abundance of fight in him; was seriously of opinion that Edward, and not he, was rightful King of France, and was determined to make good his claim. He was none the less determined to secure his own interests in the meantime, and to make of Edward a reformer as well as a conqueror. Edward must recognise the patriotism of his subjects

² Rot. Par., ii. 103.

³ Ibid., ii. 104.

by a liberal measure of reform, which should be submitted to him in the form of certain articles. Otherwise, the grant would be reduced to 2,500 sacks, which he should have in any case.⁴ The right of the king to the French crown might be irrefragable; the rights of the subject, as has always been the case in English history, were superior to those of kings, the sense of this superiority, in the year 1340, evidently being in the ratio of twelve to one. At the same time the Lords renewed their former grant, and the Conventions of Canterbury and York each gave a tenth.

By this time Edward was on his way back to England, where he arrived on the 21st February, to try the effect of a personal appeal.⁵ Parliament accordingly reassembled in the royal presence on the 29th March, to listen on the 1st April (to which day the opening sitting was adjourned) to a plaintive appeal for an immediate aid. Edward would lose his allies, and must besides return to Brussels to a debtor's prison, unless Parliament should intervene with a large grant. The credit of king and nation being at stake, the response was both prompt and generous. On the following Monday, prelates, Lords, and Commons undertook to give, on behalf of the landed interest, and in lieu of the grant lately offered, the ninth sheaf, fleece, and lamb for two years, and

⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 107-108. This Parliament also took energetic measures for the defence of the coasts, enjoining the mariners of the Cinque Ports to provide thirty ships and those of the western ports seventy; part of the cost to be defrayed by the King's Council.

⁵ His anxiety to meet Parliament appears in the fact that he summoned it immediately on his arrival at Harwich (*Fœdera*, ii. 1115).

to levy a tax of the ninth of their property on the inhabitants of cities and burghs, and a fifteenth on all others.⁶ They added an extraordinary tax on wool and other goods exported—40s. for each sack of wool—for one year, on condition that after that period the duty should not exceed half a mark for wool, and the ancient custom for other merchandise.⁷ As before, their generosity was conditioned by the acceptance of the articles aforementioned, and a committee of the three orders⁸ was appointed to examine and reduce them to statutes. The result was to add four important laws to the statute book.⁹ The first was directed against the abuses of local administration, particularly the scandalous delay in obtaining justice; the maladministration of the sheriffs, whose appointments were henceforth to be for one year, and to be renewable by the Exchequer only on evidence of the faithful discharge of their duties; the oppressions practised by the royal purveyors, who were bound to pay a fair price for goods supplied during the royal journeys through the kingdom, or for war purposes, and the maintenance of the royal castles. The second was directed against the abuse of the royal power, and was meant to safeguard against two evils, which Englishmen have ever held in abhorrence—arbitrary taxation and the illegal encroachment on the liberty of the sub-

⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 112.

⁷ Knighton, ii. 15-16; cf. Hemingburgh, ii. 354-355. Edward subsequently agreed not to exact more than two marks.

⁸ There were in reality four orders, the Commons being divided in the official account of this transaction into knights of the shire (chevalers des countrez) and representatives of cities and burghs (Rot. Par., ii. 113).

⁹ See Statutes of the Realm, i. 281, *et seq.*

ject. Hence the insistence on the confirmation of the charters, and the enactment that no charge—unauthorised tallages for instance—should be imposed on the nation without consent of Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled. English patriotism, too, was on the alert, then as ever since, the rights of the State being a matter of as deep concern to a public-spirited Parliament as the rights of the subject. The third accordingly guarded against the danger lest, in the event of the successful vindication of Edward's claim to the French crown, that of England should be reduced to a mere satellite of that of France. Edward's English subjects, it was decreed, "should not be held bound to obey him as King of France, nor should the realm of England be put in subjection to him as King of France, or to the realm of France."¹⁰ It did not occur to these patriotic Englishmen that there was any inconsistency in voting large subsidies to reduce France and Scotland to subjection to an English king, while Englishmen were stoutly maintaining the sacred integrity of England itself. But then what right have these French and Scottish rebels to differ from Englishmen in this matter? Clearly none, and therefore Englishmen will break their presumptuous heads for venturing to have any such pretensions. Finally, the rights and privileges of the clergy were asserted by a fourth statute, which protected them from the oppression of the purveyors and the abuses connected with the royal presentations to vacant benefices.

These statutes are replete with more than a mere historic interest. They bring home to us the con-

¹⁰ Rot. Par., ii. 113.

tinuity of English public life. Its characteristics are as marked in the fourteenth as in the twentieth century. An irrepressible impatience of misgovernment—local or national—an intense proneness to protest against abuse and to demand reform, a vivid sense of the sacred rights of free men, a strong national sentiment jealous of its prestige, while sometimes wanting in due respect and consideration for the rights of other peoples—in these respects our fourteenth-century Englishman is the true prototype of his modern posterity.

In return for these concessions, Parliament compliantly joined with the king in swearing on the Gospels to observe the treaties concluded at Ghent. The commercial advantages granted to the Flemings were, however, very unpopular throughout the country, and the Corporation of London flatly refused to recognise them on the ground that they constituted an infringement of its ancient privileges. Edward summoned the mayor, aldermen, and principal citizens to his presence at the Tower on the 25th May, and expatiated in winning terms on the reasons of state that had compelled him to woo the friendship of the communes of Flanders and Brabant, and on the obligation of keeping his pledged word. The jealous Londoners still demurred, and would neither be cajoled nor scolded into acquiescence. On the morrow, however, after conference with the city magnates at the Guildhall, they thought better of it, and reluctantly agreed to set the seal of the city to the obnoxious treaty. In return, Edward put on record that it was not his intention, or that of his allies, to prejudice the rights and franchises of the city of London or other towns, and that if any clause

of the treaty should be found contrary to these, it should be held as null.¹¹

On his side, Philip had not been idle throughout these spring months. At his instigation Pope Benedict XII. launched a bull of excommunication against the rebellious Flemings, and on the 4th of April the Bishop of Senlis and the Abbé of St Denis solemnly proclaimed the papal bull at Tournay. Edward was equal to the occasion. "He would," he said, in reply to the representation of the Flemings, "send English priests in plenty to celebrate divine service in Flanders, in spite of the Pope of Avignon, for he was Pope in his own country and in all the territories that held of him."¹² Pope Benedict, as political scarecrow, was a laughable figure enough, but Philip, it was presently evident, was not to be laughed at. A second Cassel should teach these insolent Flemings who was their rightful overlord. On the evening of the day on which the Bishop of Senlis played so solemnly the part of deputy of the scarecrow at Avignon, a French force, under Gode-mar du Fay, left Tournay, and burst into Flanders to pillage and burn along the Lys as far as Warneton, to the consternation of the startled Flemings, who sent an urgent summons to Edward to return.¹³ The very thing that Philip hoped he would do, for besides setting the Scots in motion on the border,¹⁴ he had quietly collected a formidable fleet at Sluys, to intercept and capture the English king. Alarmed for the safety of the queen, whom he had left at

¹¹ Archives of the Corporation of London, quoted by Lettenhove (*Jacques d'Artevelde*, pp. 73-75).

¹² Froissart, iii. 117-119.

¹³ Knighton, ii. 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* ; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 1122.

Ghent to become the mother of the famous John of Gaunt, Edward was all impatience to be off, and had very nearly fallen into the trap set for him. He owed his escape from certain disaster to the cautious advice of the chancellor, John Stratford, now Archbishop of Canterbury. His first intention was to set sail from Orwell on the 13th June with a convoy of but forty vessels. Archbishop Stratford mentioned the rumour of Philip's strategy, and remonstrated on the imprudence of exposing himself to the risk of a collision with the French fleet. His impatience would not brook a remonstrance, which he mistook for a device to prevent his departure, and the archbishop, smarting under his hasty reproaches, resigned the seals. Edward then summoned his admiral, Sir Robert Morley, and an old experienced seaman, Crabbe by name. They confirmed the archbishop's misgivings. "You and the archbishop have concocted the story to prevent my departure," burst out the headstrong monarch; "cross I will, in spite of you, and those who are afraid may stay at home, where there is no need for fear." "Sire," was the reply, "we will answer for it with our heads that you will expose yourself and your followers to inevitable death; but if you will cross, we will precede you, even if it costs us our lives." Impressed by these spirited words, he sent for the archbishop, thanked him for his well-meant counsel, and reinstated him in his office. He then sent forth a hurried mandate to the seaports on the north and south coasts, and in ten days' time a fleet of 260 vessels¹⁵ had assembled at Orwell to convoy him to

¹⁵ Murimuth, p. 105.

Sluys.¹⁶ With this fleet, which, according to Froissart,¹⁷ carried four thousand men-at-arms and twelve thousand archers, he set sail on the morning of the 22nd June,¹⁸ accompanied by the Earls of Derby, Northampton, Huntingdon, Gloucester, and many other celebrated leaders of English chivalry.¹⁹

While he voyages in quest of naval adventures, let us cast a look Flanders-ward, and discover what Philip has been achieving there and in Hainault in the interval. Nothing of very great moment in truth, except in the dismal, inhuman business of looting and burning, and therefore Froissart and his fellow-chroniclers must submit to the utmost abridgment for the reader's comfort. Philip opened this sorry chapter in chivalrous warfare by sending John de Coucy into the district of Chimay, belonging to that cursed traitor, John of Hainault, with the order "to put everything to the flames."²⁰ This the said John de Coucy did, in grim and literal obedience, to the horror of the citizens of Chimay, who, however, displayed such a fierce determination from their stout old ramparts not to be sacked and slaughtered, that the marauders did not hazard an assault, and made off back to French territory. Next, from Cambrai came a shock of warriors into Hainault to vent the episcopal wrath at the excesses of the imperial invaders of last autumn on Count William's city of Haspres. The bishop being a staunch believer in the gospel of revenge, as

¹⁶ Avesbury, pp. 310-312. From *Fœdera*, ii. 1129, it appears that Stratford again resigned the seals on the 20th June, owing to infirmity. They were entrusted to his brother Robert, Bishop of Chichester.

¹⁷ iii. 194.

¹⁹ Knighton, ii. 17.

¹⁸ *Fœdera*, ii. 1129.

²⁰ Froissart, iii. 75.

bishops were in those days of the Church militant, the episcopal warriors "assembled themselves secretly one Saturday, and came by night to Haspres, a good town and gay, and robbed and pillaged and hustled men and women before them, and burned the town most villainously, and violated the abbey."²¹ Tidings of which being brought about midnight to Valenciennes, Count William roused the sleepy bellman, and bade him ring out the tocsin, and calling to the assembled citizens, "Who loves me, follow me!", galloped off to take instant vengeance. But the marauders were already well on their way back to Cambrai before he reached Haspres, and Count William turned homewards vowing vengeance on the bishop and his abettor, King Philip. Wherefore it was agreed in Parliament of Hainault, assembled at Mons, to send a herald to Paris to defy the said Philip, and straightway to carry fire and sword into Thierasche. On a Friday morning the men of Hainault, under Count William and his uncle John, with German and Brabant auxiliaries, took the road from Chimay towards Aubenton, "a big town, and rich, and full of drapery,"²² finally bursting, after much effort of fighting—continued for nearly a week—through the three gates, in the face of the spears, and arrows, and stones of the defenders, John of Hainault striking lusty blows the while, and pursuing that fugitive villain, Jean de Coucy, the ravager of Chimay, as far as Vervins, and then returning to complete the sacking of the wretched city. Over forty towns and villages were visited with the same doom before the men of Hainault retraced their steps with baggage carts

²¹ Froissart, iii. 86.

²² Ibid., iii. 95.

laden to the brim with booty.²³ Anon the dismal scene shifts to Flanders, towards Cambrai, whither the men of Tournay pushed forwards, burning, cattle lifting, loading their carts with everything movable and valuable, and returning to Tournay heavy laden with spoil. At this Jacques d'Artevelde waxed furious, and he in turn set out to sate his vengeance on the men of Tournay with sixty thousand stout burghers of Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges. Unfortunately the Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, whom he had summoned to his aid, fell into an ambush, set for them by the men of Lille, and were taken prisoners and sent to Paris,²⁴ causing Jacques to halt and turn back empty-handed to Ghent, to nurse his vexation, until the news that the Duke of Normandy had burst into Hainault at the head of thirty-six thousand men again set him in motion to the rescue. The duke, too, had his ample share of burning and pillaging to place to the credit of King Philip against Count William, and Quesnoy, Landrecies, Valenciennes, were soon full of the miserable inhabitants, fleeing thither from burning towns and villages. The men of Quesnoy had their cannons ready to receive him, and the amazing noise, rather than the discharge itself of these fire-vomiting monsters, startled the horses of the advancing host, and compelled their riders to beat an undignified retreat.²⁵ The duke then made for

²³ Froissart, iii. 98-102.

²⁴ Murimuth, pp. 104-105; Knighton, ii. 17; Froissart, iii. 119-131.

²⁵ Froissart, iii. 152. On les fist tantot retraire, car cil dou Kesnoy descliquierent canons et bombardes qui jettoient grans quariaus. Si se doubtoient li François de leurs chevaus et se retraisent, etc.

Valenciennes, sacking and rieving as he went, and at length drew up his army in three battles, under himself, the Duke of Bourbon, and the Count of Flanders, on the hillock of Castres, for the assault. At which spectacle the blood of the men of Valenciennes boiled into fury, and with difficulty could Henry d'Antoing, commander of the city, in the absence of Count William, gone to seek Flemish aid, keep them within the safe protection of their stout ramparts. Earl Warwick, John of Chandos, Hugh of Hastings, Roger de Clifford, Roger de Beauchamp, John de Grey, and other high-spirited Englishmen then at Valenciennes, would, however, on no account be restrained at the sight of a French squadron which had strayed from the main body, and sallied out and put it to the rout, and took its commander prisoner. For some days the men of Valenciennes awaited the shock, but the duke was diffident, notwithstanding his three "battles" of thirty-six thousand men, and held dubious council with his captains, to resolve finally that the thing was impossible, and depart back to Cambrai and lodge the greater part of his battles in garrison at Lille, Douai, and Tournay, for the present. But not for long, for Count William, who had hurried back from Flanders, and had marshalled his men of Hainault once more, with men of Brabant and other principalities as before, was soon in hot march to the relief of Thun l'Eveque, southwards on the Scheldt. Thereabouts, on either bank of the Scheldt, there was magnificent parade of great hosts, the duke being joined by his father, King Philip, Count William by Jacques d'Artevelde and his sixty thousand Flemings. Once more, as at Buironfosse, there was

much parley and weighing of pros and cons, for there in front was a deep river, without convenient bridge, to cross, before Count William could take vengeance on the Duke of Normandy; the Duke of Brabant being for procrastination till King Edward should arrive. Of these dilatory tactics Count William would on no account hear, and finally sent uncle John of Hainault to ask a respite of three days for the purpose of constructing a bridge across the Scheldt. At last, impatient reader, this threatening parley of heralds seems to portend a speedy conclusion of this dismal business of siege and sack in the terrible shock of a right bloody battle. Our chronicler is evidently in earnest this time, as he prepares to launch his Flemings and Hainaulters full gallop into the thick of the fray, as soon as he shall have made or found a bridge for them to get across on. Yet, once more, patience, for Philip is still in evasive mood, and once again there is no battle to record, and the Scheldt still runs in peace between the two hosts when Froissart lays down his pen. But hark! What news is this from the sea — down yonder towards Sluys? Fell news, indeed, for King Philip, who hastily rides off in tragic silence to Arras, his army following, while Count William and his allies begin their jubilant march back to Valenciennes.²⁶

We left Edward on board at Orwell, with his fleet, 260 ships in all, crowding sail for Sluys, on Thursday morning, the 22nd June. On Friday, the 23rd,²⁷ the great armada hove in sight of Sluys, and descried the masts of the French fleet, "rising like

²⁶ Froissart, iii. 140-193, and 198.

²⁷ Hemingburgh, ii. 356; cf. Murimuth, p. 106.

a forest," says Froissart, on the horizon between Blankenberg and Sluys. "The ships of Barbavera," calls the pilot, in answer to Edward's question. "Long have I yearned to fight him," cried Edward, remembering the sack of Southampton and sundry other disasters, "and now, please God and St George, I shall have my revenge."²⁸ The rest of the day he spent in discussing the plan of battle and reconnoitring the enemy.²⁹ On the morrow, Saturday, the 24th, St John's Day, he ranged his fleet in three lines, the large vessels in front, men-at-arms posted in every third ship, archers in the two intervening ones, gunners, too, with their primitive cannon, if some of the chroniclers speak truly;³⁰ the second in reserve close behind, ready to aid the first where necessary; the third well to the rear, entrusted with the duty of guarding the ladies of rank going to pay their respects to the queen at Ghent. Then, tacking in order to have the advantage of wind, tide, and sun, the first line—the admiral, Sir Robert Morley, in the van³¹—dashed straight at the enemy, to the astonishment of the Normans, who, with cries of exultation, had mistaken the clever initial movement for retreat, and prepared to pursue. The French fleet, too, 140 large ships, including some huge Spanish galleons,³² besides innumerable smaller craft, and manned by forty thousand Normans, Genoese, and Picards, was ranged in three lines.³³ The ships of each line were fastened together by chains, their

²⁸ Froissart, iii. 200.

²⁹ Murimuth, p. 106; cf. Knighton, ii. 18.

³⁰ Chronicle written at Sluys, quoted by M. Lettenhove; Froissart, iii. 492.

³¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 356.

³² Murimuth, p. 105.

³³ Ibid., p. 106; Hemingburgh, ii. 356, says four.

boats suspended half-mast full of stones and other missiles, the "wooden castles" at the mast-tops crowded with bowmen.³⁴ Thus arrayed, the great armament moved out of the bay of Sluys to the sound of horns and trumpets, "and other instruments of music."

A notable moment this in the history, not merely of a day, but of the centuries, for on this 24th June 1340, not only the fortune of Edward, but the supremacy of the sea, hangs in the balance. Edward stood on the deck of his warship, whose banner bore the arms of England and France—a golden crown, glittering in the sun, pendant from the foremast—not only as claimant of the French throne, but as claimant of the lordship of the sea,³⁵ and by sundown the issue would disclose the destiny of the future. To-day, as in many a naval encounter since, Englishmen fight for victory on the waves as if for home and hearth—fight, too, as Englishmen know how to fight on such a battle-ground. These Normans and Genoese, too, are born sea-fighters, equally confident in their superiority, and resolute to assert it. To the English shouts of "St George, Guienne!" they answered with defiant cries of "France!" as the whirlwind of fierce and desperate battle began to rage along the first lines—English arrows whizzing their deadly flight in response to the volleys of the Genoese cross-bowmen, cannon booming their fiery thunders with probably more noise than execution, balistas hurling iron bolts³⁶—far more deadly

³⁴ Hemingburgh, ii. 356.

³⁵ Progenitores nostri reges Angliæ domini maris Anglicani circumquaque exstiterint.

³⁶ Baker de Swinbroke, p. 142.

these—, showers of stones crashing from the wooden castles at the masthead ; men-at-arms, too, thrusting and hacking at each other in desperate hand-to-hand conflict, as the sailors threw out their grappling irons and locked the hostile ships in deadly embrace. Anon a great shout rang out from the English line in jubilant celebration of the capture of the “Christopher,” one of the largest ships of the day, the “Black Cog,” and other English vessels previously taken by the French during their piratic cruises in the Channel. Their Genoese crews being hacked in pieces by the men-at-arms, the archers swarmed on board and continued to ply their bows from this vantage ground with still more deadly effect, their battle fury heightened by the presence of the king himself, ever in the thickest of the combat that day. There, too, might be seen the Earls of Derby, Huntingdon, Gloucester, Northampton, Pembroke, Hereford, Richmond (Count Robert of Artois), Walter de Manny, John of Chandos, and many more, to whose credit our chronicler has much to tell had he but space to write it. With no less determined courage the Normans and Genoese disputed every plank, neither asking nor giving quarter, and for several hours their valour and their superior numbers kept the issue hanging in the balance, till at last the deadly practice of the archers ended in the defeat and capture of the first line (but only “with great difficulty,” admits our English scribe³⁷). The spectacle of the dead piled in heaps on the bloody decks, of the gashed corpses tumbled into the waves—a gruesome commentary on the obstinacy of both defence and

³⁷ Licet cum magna difficultate (Murimuth, pp. 106-107).

attack—shook the nerves of the crews of the remaining two French lines, which were now exposed to attack in the rear as well as the front.

By this time the Flemings, whom the urgent summons of Edward had brought in thousands from Bruges, Blankenberg, Dam, and other towns, were crowding out from Sluys in boats and Spanish galleons to help effectively to win the day for their allies.³⁸ Thus taken in front and rear, their captains Quieret and Bahucet dead, Barbavera sailing off in adventurous flight inshore, the confidence of the morning was changed into terror and confusion before nightfall. In the fierce press from front and rear, escape was almost impossible, and many boatfuls of would-be fugitives, who threw themselves in the madness of their terror into the boats, sank to the bottom. Only thirty vessels of the third line ultimately succeeded in getting clear, and sailing away into the darkness, followed by doughty old John Crabbe, who kept up a running fight till next morning.

Thus ended one of the bloodiest of naval battles, which in downright butchery is eminently creditable to Christian chivalry, and for which His Grace of Canterbury, pious man, devoutly intoned the "Te Deum" by royal command. On this point the chroniclers are positive, that at least two-thirds of those forty thousand Normans and Genoese were

³⁸ Hemingburgh, however, says that the Flemings stood on the shore watching the event of the battle, although the king had sent the Bishop of Lincoln to summon their aid (p. 356). The other English chroniclers are silent as to this charge, and as Froissart and others are positive in their assertion that the Flemings rendered timely help, Hemingburgh's accusation must be dismissed as unfounded.

either killed or drowned—very creditable to their pugnacity, at any rate. Twenty-five thousand is the number given by Knighton and Baker; Hemingburgh, Avesbury, Walsingham, are satisfied with thirty thousand; while Froissart, who delights to kill off the losing side when he is at it, leaves not a man alive, and sets down forty thousand. The loss on the English side, though serious enough, was light in comparison. It did not exceed four thousand men,³⁹ and only included four of noble rank—Sir Thomas Mounthermere, a relative of the king, Sir Thomas Latimer, Sir William Northbourne, and another whose name has escaped the chronicler's memory. The capture of nearly the whole French fleet—two hundred great vessels, says Avesbury—is an additional testimony to the extraordinary completeness of the victory. With this superlative achievement in the butcher business the bloodthirsty reader ought to be well content till Crecy, especially as there will be plenty of Christian bloodshed on a lesser scale to beguile the interval.⁴⁰

Edward spent the night on board, where there was high carousal, with blowing of trumpets and beating of tambours, in honour of the victory. On

³⁹ The French chroniclers agree in placing it at ten thousand, including many knights.

⁴⁰ For the battle of Sluys, see Froissart, iii. 193-206; Jean le Bel, i. 171-173; Murimuth, pp. 105-109; Avesbury, pp. 310-314, who gives the king's letter announcing the victory; cf. Foedera, ii. 129; Knighton, ii. 17-18; Baker de Swinbroke, pp. 141-144; Hemingburgh, ii. 355-359; Walsingham, i. 226-227; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 333-334; Cont. de Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 168-170, who ascribes the defeat to the want of harmony between the French commanders; Grandes Chroniques, v. 385-387, which report that the French admiral, Behucet, was hung up at the masthead by the victors, and Quieret killed, though taken alive.

the morrow, he landed, and went in procession, with three hundred priests,⁴¹ whom he had brought with him to spite the French Pope and celebrate divine service in the Flemish churches, to sing a "Te Deum" in the chapel of my lady of Ardenbourg. In the evening he arrived at Ghent, to receive the welcome of the queen and the enthusiastic plaudits of the burghers. Blank misery, on the other hand, filled the camp of King Philip on the Upper Scheldt. The royal fool, prompted by the abashed courtiers, at length broke the terrible news. "What cowards these English are," he exclaimed. "How so?" asked the king. "Because," was the sardonic retort, "they are afraid to jump into the sea, as our brave Normans and Frenchmen did."⁴² Whereupon Philip rode off, speechless, to Arras, to disband part of his army, and dispose of the rest in garrison at Tournay, St Omer, Lille, Douai, and other frontier towns.⁴³

From Ghent, Edward, hotly intent on following up his triumph at Sluys, proceeded to Vilvoorden to confer with his allies. His military prestige and his financial credit being at the meridian, there was no procrastination on this occasion, and the siege of Tournay was forthwith resolved on in deference to Jacques d'Artevelde and Flemish patriotism. Towards the middle of July he was already on the march thither with a hundred thousand men.⁴⁴ But the siege of Tournay, which was strongly garrisoned and amply provisioned, must be a lengthy business, and Edward was impatient to bring Philip straight-way to his knees. He therefore despatched a challenge, addressed to "Philip of Valois," from Chin

⁴¹ Froissart, iii. 211.

⁴² Walsingham, i. 227.

⁴³ Froissart, iii. 207-213.

⁴⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 1130 (9th July).

les Tournay,⁴⁵ on the 26th July, informing him that he had entered Flanders as sovereign lord thereof—*i.e.*, as King of France; and summoning him to come forth and decide their dispute by personal combat, to save the further shedding of Christian blood. Certainly a very fair offer, supposing Edward's claim a tenable one, and it were to be wished that kings had observed this chivalrous method at all times, and thus saved the world from the curse of their quarrelsomeness. If Philip declined to expose his sacred person in this risky fashion, let him select a hundred of his best warriors and meet him in fair field with a like number of stout Englishmen. Or, if he preferred the more kingly method of slaughtering his good subjects wholesale for the privilege of being ruled by a king, let him appear before Tournay within ten days and take his chance of a second day's mutual slaughter of each other's lieges. Such is a free translation of Edward's epistle from the humanitarian point of view! In four days' time (30th July) Philip indited a stinging reply from the Priory of St Andrew.⁴⁶ Edward's letter to Philip of Valois could not have been destined for the King of France, but as the King of France had been informed that his rebellious vassal had invaded his domains, it was his intention to drive him out of his territories whenever it might seem good to him.

Edward doubtless kept the contents of this letter to himself, and tried to forget the sting by applying himself to the siege of Tournay in the meantime, as

⁴⁵ For Edward's letter and Philip's reply see *Fœdera*, ii. 1131; Murimuth, pp. 109-114; Avesbury, pp. 314-316.

⁴⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 1131.

a preliminary to taking the road to Compiègne, to teach Philip more courteous manners in due season. In the hope of starving it into speedy surrender, he posted his army on both sides of the Scheldt, and effectively blocked all communication by occupying the exits from the city. While he himself took post before the gate St Martin to the south, on the right bank of the Scheldt, the Bishop of Lincoln (fitting counterpart of his episcopal brother of Cambrai) barred the Cocquerel Gate; the Duke of Brabant guarded that of Valenciennes to the east; Count William of Hainault the roads leading to the south-east; Jacques d'Artevelde and his Flemings that of St Fontaine to the west, on the left bank; the men of Juliers, Gueldres, &c., every other avenue. For weeks on end they battered the walls with their siege engines—cannon among them—without result; being answered in kind by the men of Tournay, not without deadly effect on Jacques d'Artevelde's Flemings and others. The lengthy artillery duel proving a failure, the old-fashioned method of storming the gates was next tried. The gates, too, defied every effort to hack or burn them down, and as there were murmurs among the men of Brabant and Flanders at this procrastination of success, an effort must be made to force an entrance by way of the Scheldt. Boatfuls of Flemings accordingly swept down on the portcullis pendent from the arch towards the water, with axes and poles wherewith to hack or force it aside, their archers ready to gall their assailants meanwhile. A whole day they laboured at that tough portcullis, which the men of Tournay defended with the utmost desperation, from the

ramparts above and from boats on the river inside, finally forcing their assailants to desist, with terrible loss. Every expedient of forcible valour being exhausted, is there not some one sufficiently skilled in the black art to spirit a wooden dragon, as at Troy of old, over these irresistible walls, filled with cats, covered with oakum dipped in sulphur, which being ignited by timely incantations, might set the town on fire? A master of the art being found, Count William set to work collecting all the cats in the district in the Church of Kain, but the disappearance of the magician saved them and the citizens of Tournay from the dread effects of Count William's credulity.

Meanwhile the besiegers kept themselves in provisions by raids far and near over the country between the Scheldt and the Scarp, Count William, for instance, sacking St Amand, and massacring its garrison in revenge for the destruction of the Abbey of Hanson; sacking, too, Orchies, Marchiennes, Landas, &c. On the other hand, the rations of the garrison of Tournay were rapidly diminishing towards *nil*, and Edward was impatiently calculating how long an empty stomach could do the work of a fighting man. The poor folk of the town were driven forth to fare as they might, in the hope of prolonging the process of starvation within the walls, but the French cavaliers who walked the streets in quest of a dinner in vain could ill resist the temptation of opening the gates, and earning a meal in the camp of the besiegers by their compliance. Should Philip not instantly advance from Arras, where he had been gathering a mighty host these past six weeks, Edward must

speedily have the pleasure of dining these chevaliers in Tournay itself. At last, in the second week of September, came the glad news that he was at Bouvines, three leagues or so distant, at the head of the might of France, under the Dukes of Normandy, Burgundy, Brittany, the Counts of Alençon, Blois, Armagnac, Harcourt, and many more of the *élite* of French chivalry, and his allies, Bohemia, Navarre, Savoy, Lorraine, Bar, Liege, Metz, Geneva. Halting between Bouvines and Tressin, he pitched his camp along the Marcq, in the hope that from this strong position, accessible only by a narrow bridge on the side towards the Anglo-Imperial lines, he in turn might starve Edward into retreat or negotiation. For the third time within a year our chronicler displays the picturesque spectacle of two great feudal armies within striking distance, with the presence of five kings—those of England, Scotland, France, Bohemia, Navarre—with innumerable princes to boot, to lend it *éclat*, as at Buironfosse. For the third time his bellicose spirits rose at the prospect of *beau aper-tisses d'armes*, “beautiful feats of arms,” and for the third time there are no doughty deeds to place to the credit of his valorous knights—nothing, in fact, in the glorious art of Christian bloodshed, beyond a contemptible skirmish between a troop of Hainaulters, under William de Baileu, and a detachment of the Bishop of Liege’s men. Philip, relying on the dissensions in the Anglo-Imperial camp to do the work of raising the siege of Tournay, continued to observe the defensive from behind the marshes of the Marcq, and Edward, being again in low water financially (remittances in wool and money not

having come from England), and unable in consequence to keep his motley army together, reluctantly⁴⁷ listened to the entreaties of the Dowager-Duchess of Hainault, Jeanne de Valois, Philip's sister, and consented to negotiate. On the 25th September his plenipotentiaries agreed to the truce of Espelechin,⁴⁸ to last till the 22nd June following, and to include, besides France, England, and the Low Countries, Scotland, Gascony, Guienne, Spain, Castille, Genoa, Provence, and several other smaller principalities, Philip undertaking, by special stipulation, not to assist the Scots, should they refuse their assent to the transaction.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Murimuth, p. 116.

⁴⁸ Fœdera, ii. 1135.

⁴⁹ For the siege of Tournay see Froissart, iii. 214-231, and 245-316; Jean le Bel, i. 175-194; Cont. de Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 171-177; Chronique Normande du XIV. Siècle (Molinier), pp. 46-48; Murimuth, pp. 109-116; Avesbury, pp. 314-320; Knighton, ii. 19-22; Hemingburgh, ii. 360-363; Baker, pp. 146-148; Corpus Chron. Flandriæ, ii. 224-231.

CHAPTER IX.

KING, ARCHBISHOP, AND PARLIAMENT (1340-1341).

EDWARD was mortified by this second failure of his aggressive plans against Philip, and returned to Ghent in the angriest of moods. The campaign had added enormously to his debts, without bringing him a single step nearer to the realisation of his ambition. Instead of helping to advance the object of the war, the coalition was merely piling up the national debt—a contingency not unfamiliar in English history. This infatuation of English kings for aggressive Continental enterprises which do not pay, and usually fail, soon became most unpopular with the English taxpayer. The English taxpayer had already begun to kick, in dogged English fashion, at the honour of being the paymaster of impecunious Europe, and had obstinately obstructed¹ the royal collectors in the task of fleecing him for the benefit of Edward's foreign creditors. So general was this obstruction that the Duke of Cornwall had to call Parliament together in July to devise means of raising the subsidy granted in April. In the midst of its deliberations the Earls of Gloucester and Arundel arrived with letters

¹ The records of Parliament, which met in July, significantly mention *les duretees, difficultees, et empeachmentz, queux les assignez et les gentz du pais y mettent* (against the collection of the subsidy granted)—*Rot. Par.*, ii. 117.

from Edward, urgently emphasising the necessity for prompt financial succour.² Whereupon it was agreed to raise at once twenty thousand sacks of wool, and sell them at a low price to the merchants, the merchants in the meantime to advance the sum to the king.³ Of this patriotic resolution Edward was informed in a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the council on the 30th July.⁴ But again there was exasperating delay. August and September passed, and still the expected remittances came not, and Edward returned from Tournay to Ghent a virtual prisoner in the hands of his allies and his creditors, the money-lenders. This was a galling situation for the conqueror of Sluys, and the would-be conqueror of two kingdoms, and in his exasperation he swore vengeance on the archbishop and the other members of the council, at whose doors he laid the blame for the failure of the campaign. He accordingly determined to cross the North Sea, and exact an exemplary reckoning in person. In order to get out of the clutches of his creditors, he was compelled to steal away from Ghent, on the pretext of taking an airing⁵ to Zealand, leaving the Earl of Derby to face the reproaches of the money-lenders, and to occupy a debtor's cell in his stead.⁶ Here he found a vessel to carry him and the queen and a small suite to the Thames, where he arrived on the 30th November,⁷ after a

² Rot. Par., ii. 117.

³ Ibid., ii. 118-122.

⁴ Ibid., ii. 122.

⁵ *Fingens se velle spatiari* (Murimuth, p. 116; Baker, p. 148).

⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 1143, where we read that the company of the Leopardi have released Henry de Lancaster, Earl of Derby, arrested in foreign parts for the king's debts.

⁷ *Fœdera*, ii. 1141.

hazardous voyage (French necromancers being at work) of three days.

It was midnight when Edward landed at the Tower. His arrival was unexpected, and his wrath was not mollified by finding the Tower without a guard. He startled the constable, Nicolas de la Beche, out of his slumbers by a summons to his presence, and placed him forthwith under arrest. Then came the turn of the high officers of State, Robert Stratford, Bishop of Chichester, whom he had appointed chancellor in the preceding June, in place of his brother, the archbishop; Robert Northburgh, Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, the treasurer; Sir John Stonore, the chief justice, and several other judges; Andrew Aubrey, the Mayor of London; the chief clerks of Chancery, and the clerk of the Exchequer, who were clapped into the Tower in the morning. Even the bishops, he threatened, should be packed off to Flanders to take the place of Derby in a debtor's prison for their remissness, the Clementine Constitutions notwithstanding. He subsequently relaxed so far as to set the chancellor and the treasurer at liberty in deference to the privileges of their order;⁸ but he would have nothing more to do with clerical ministers, and filled their places with laymen, Sir Robert de Burghcher being made chancellor, and Sir Robert Sadlington treasurer.⁹

The collectors of wool and other taxes in each county were the next to feel his animosity. The commissioners whom he appointed to inquire into

⁸ Avesbury, p. 324.

⁹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1142; *Murimuth*, p. 118; *Hemingburgh*, p. 363, *Non clericos immo sæculares ad placitum suum substituit.*

their conduct levied heavy fines with indiscriminating severity, and without regard to legal forms. Their arbitrary procedure aroused general indignation, notably in London, whose citizens stoutly resisted this visitation as an infringement of their chartered rights. When the irate monarch established his justiciaries in the Tower for the purpose of holding an inquiry, their discontent found vent in a riot. In a rage Edward sent to discover the names of the leaders, but on finding that the rioters belonged to the lower classes, he smothered his resentment, and abandoned the obnoxious inquiry.¹⁰ The example of his father's sorry fate was too recent for him to presume too much on English loyalty, especially in those days of feudal privilege, which, after all, was compatible with a large measure of public spirit, and prone, even to anarchy, to defend its rights.

Some of the chroniclers seek to justify this forcible procedure by accusing the members of the council and their subordinates of peculation. Remissness there seems to have been somewhere, chiefly on the part of the taxpayer; but the charge of peculation against the ministers at least had probably no better foundation than the aspersions of some of their rivals for power at Court, who resented the ascendancy of the Stratfords. In the jaundiced eyes of these malignant Court gossips the archbishop was even a pensioner of King Philip, and a secret henchman of the French Pope, and therefore a detestable traitor! In this view the resentful monarch evidently shared; and his credulity and his anger betrayed him into a bitter

¹⁰ Murimuth, pp. 118-119; Baker, p. 150.

and undignified controversy with the high-spirited primate.

During the previous twenty years John Stratford¹¹ had been a prominent figure in political and ecclesiastical life. He early made his mark as a lawyer of ability, whose services were turned to account by Edward II. in various embassies to Avignon. It was while he was at the Papal Court, along with the Bishop of Winchester, in 1323, that he had the good fortune to be nominated by John XXII. to that See, on the sudden death of his fellow-ambassador. There was a disappointed rival for the post, Robert de Baldock, a favourite of the Despensers, who had, of course, the support of Edward II. His nomination was accordingly opposed by the dominant faction at Court, and a year elapsed before he succeeded in asserting his right, and taking possession of his See. The ambitious lawyer was but an indifferent bishop, and regarded his new dignity merely as a fulcrum to raise him to higher political office. Prelates in those days were better versed in the subtleties of law and diplomacy than in the precepts of the gospel—let alone its spirit. They shone more as politicians, and even as warriors, than as pastors of their flock, and John Stratford was no exception to the rule. He was deeply involved in the revolution which drove Edward II. from the throne, was in fact entrusted with the task of drawing up the articles of deposition, and was

¹¹ For the early life of Stratford, see Birchington (a fourteenth-century writer), *Vitæ Arch. Cant. in Anglia Sacra*, i. 19-20; cf. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, iv. 1-30. This author, by a bad slip, makes Edward besiege Tournay for nine months!

one of the chief actors in the sorry scene enacted in Kenilworth Castle on the 23rd January 1327. His share in this transaction may be ascribed to his public spirit rather than to a sordid interest in revolutionary intrigue, for he was marked out by Mortimer for destruction as the obnoxious opponent of an arbitrary regime. For the next three years he led the life of an outlaw, chiefly in the woods around Bishops Waltham, one of his episcopal manors. On the fall of Mortimer, he became one of the most trusted of the counsellors of the young king, with whom he had managed to maintain secret communications. He was appointed lord chancellor, and distinguished his tenure of the great seal by his efforts to establish a firm, constitutional government. At his instigation the practice of the great barons of attending Parliament at the head of armed retinues—so dangerous to the authority of both king and Parliament—was prohibited by royal proclamation in 1332, and this precautionary measure became a precedent which henceforth protected the dignity and liberty of Parliament from the turbulence of lawless feudal magnates, and helped to make it an all-powerful factor in national life. On the death of Archbishop Mepeham in October 1333, his ambition reached its goal by his promotion to the primacy. He resigned the chancellorship, which was conferred on Edward's old tutor, Richard Bury, Bishop of Durham. The worldly-minded archbishop could ill adapt himself to the sacrifice of devoting his energies to his spiritual functions. Though he had been a bishop for ten years, he had done the work by substitute, and the responsibility of governing the English Church was not sufficient to deter him from

neglecting his archiepiscopal duties¹² for the more congenial participation in political work. In June 1335 he again became chancellor, and devoted his attention to the development of manufactures. In the negotiations relative to Edward's claim to the French crown, he took, too, an active part, and though not an aggressive champion, and averse to war, he headed many of the embassies despatched to prosecute it in foreign Courts. He again resigned before the actual declaration of war, and though he took office for the third time for two months in 1340, it was in his capacity as president of the council, or prime minister, that Edward held him responsible for the maladministration to which he ascribed the ill-success of the campaign of that year.

The archbishop had escaped the fate of his brother, the chancellor, by a timely retreat to Canterbury, where he took sanctuary in the priory of Christ Church.¹³ Edward interpreted his flight as a proof of guilt. It would have been more heroic to remain and face the choleric monarch, and Stratford would probably have done so had there been a chance of fair argument. He was not deficient in personal courage, but he knew that the impulsive young king was prejudiced against him by his detractors,¹⁴ and wisely chose his own vantage ground for meeting him and them. At London he was president of the council; at Canterbury he was the successor of Thomas

¹² *Multipliciter occupatus hujusmodi negotiis sæcularibus, et non ecclesiasticis, ut debebat* (Birchington, p. 20).

¹³ Avesbury, p. 324; Birchington, p. 21.

¹⁴ *In omnibus ex adverso malignas facientes interpretationes de eo, dicentes ipsum esse Regis et Regni Angliæ proditorem* (Birchington, p. 20). The same author adds that his enemies, lay and clerical, conspired to bring about his death.

à Becket, and could face his accusers with the prestige of an exalted self-consciousness. An archbishop speaking from the chair of St Thomas could at least reckon on the respectful attention of the country, especially if he spoke as the advocate of the rights of the subject against the abuse of authority by a king, who listens to evil counsellors. This has ever been a popular attitude in English history, and it was one which Stratford adopted by conviction as well as policy. It was not the first time that he had testified, and suffered on behalf of the supremacy of the law over the executive power, and he was now to prove himself as staunch in his opposition to an arbitrary king as he had been to an unprincipled usurper of the supreme authority. The two cases, he virtually contended, were identical; only he saved the personal honour of the king by adroitly ascribing his arbitrary acts, not to his choleric, autocratic impulses, but to the evil advice of his counsellors. By this device Englishmen have at times vindicated their right of free criticism of the powers that be in a plain-spoken fashion, not very complimentary to royalty. Among these Archbishop John Stratford deserves an honourable place, though time has crowded him into the hind ranks of the noble army of the defenders of English liberty.

Edward sent Sir Nicolas Cantilupe,¹⁵ in the beginning of December, in pursuit of the fugitive prelate, to demand that he should either pay his debts or surrender himself a prisoner to the royal creditors. In an evil moment Stratford had agreed to stand security for part of Edward's obligations to the foreign money-lenders, and was legally liable to pay

¹⁵ Birchington, p. 21.

or to go to prison. He had evidently not contemplated the remotest possibility of the latter alternative ever being presented to him, and Edward could never have been so mean as to take so shabby an advantage of his generosity had he not desired to humiliate and ruin him. The reason he adduced in justification of this harsh ultimatum was the culpability of the archbishop in neglecting to send him remittances. This charge Stratford stoutly rebutted, and as he saw in these harsh tactics the device of his enemies—among them that scheming cleric, Bishop Orleton, his successor at Winchester, and Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln, his rival in political preferment and the ablest diplomatist of the day—to ruin him, he refused to comply, and wrote to Edward exhorting him to dismiss his evil advisers. His remonstrance being treated with contemptuous silence, he had recourse to the grand weapon of ecclesiastical self-defence—excommunication. To make use of such a weapon in political controversy was often a clerical dodge for stifling argument and defeating justice. To parry the charge of maladministration by pronouncing the curse of God on his accuser was not to answer it, but Stratford was convinced that he would not be granted a fair trial, if his enemies could help it, and cannot be accused of evasive tactics in seeking to put a spoke in the wheel of their hostile intrigues. On the contrary, he demanded a fair trial before his peers, and only pronounced the highest censure of the Church against those who, in subversion of Magna Charta and the liberties of the Church, were guilty of such arbitrary and unconstitutional procedure. In the presence of a vast congregation, he ascended the pulpit of Canterbury Cathedral, and preached a

significant sermon from the text, "Elisha was not afraid of any prince, nor could any one subject him by his power." In the presence of the shrine of St Thomas the application was patent. The archbishop, like the martyred saint and the Hebrew prophet, stood there to vindicate his own rights and the rights of the people from arbitrary oppressors, and could appeal to a sympathetic audience in so doing. On such an occasion popular sentiment identifies itself with the intrepid man who has it in him to defy the powers that be, and strike oppression dead at his feet, if only in rhetoric fashion. It sees, in a Stratford the representative of its own dignity as well as the minister of heaven, in his spiritual thunders the expression of its own grievances. This use of excommunication was the safety valve of the human spirit in those rough centuries when the Church was the most representative institution of the people. By-and-by the people will express its protest in the more direct channel of revolution. For the present, the Church, with such a high-spirited prelate for archbishop, performs this useful function in dignified and not ineffective fashion. From this point of view, John Stratford, ready, in Canterbury pulpit, to hurl his curse upon the wrongdoers who would fain mislead the king, and trample on the rights of honest men, is a formidable figure. His discourse was pitched in a very subdued tone, was, in fact, interrupted by the tears which choked his utterance, as he confessed his neglect of his spiritual duties, and his unworthiness to stand in the place of St Thomas, who had renounced the world, and secular office, on his promotion to the primacy. But the repentant prelate was not to be trampled upon by

an arbitrary king and an unscrupulous faction, and ended his pathetic discourse by pronouncing excommunicate all subverters of the rights of the people and the liberties of the Church—particularly those who infringed the great charter—and all who, by false accusations, sought to prejudice the king against his faithful lieges, and deprive them of justice. Then the candles were extinguished, and amid the darkness and the stench the people groped their way to the door.¹⁶ From this sentence the king and the royal family were exempted.

Stratford followed up this drastic act of self-defence by a personal appeal to the king, couched in paternal but unflinching language. This letter¹⁷ is one of the most pointed protests ever addressed by subject to sovereign, and shows us John Stratford in the light of the loyal, but inflexible and high-spirited Englishman, who respects the king, but reverences the law and his own rights still more. Let his very gentle lord (*très douce seigneur*) take warning from the example of Rehoboam, who, by neglecting King Solomon's wise maxims, and following the counsel of fools and flatterers, had ruined the kingdom of Israel. Let him learn from the fate of his own father what evil counsel and arbitrary government lead to in England. His creatures, for their own ends, seek to mislead him into the belief that the nation approves his unconstitutional proceedings.

¹⁶ Birchington, pp. 21-22, who summarises the sentence of excommunication which, as subsequently directed to be promulgated by the suffragans of his province, is given in full by Hemingburgh, ii. 375-380, and Walsingham, i. 237-240.

¹⁷ It is dated 1st January 1341 (*Fœdera*, ii. 1143); Avesbury, pp. 324-327; Walsingham, i. 231-234; Hemingburgh, ii. 363-367, gives a Latin translation of the French original.

Let him learn the truth from an honest man. Englishmen will not tamely submit to see the law broken and the charter infringed even by a popular king, in defiance of the coronation oath. Hitherto he has preserved their goodwill by governing in accordance with the wisdom of Parliament, and the nation has supported him in his enterprises as never King of England had been supported. Let him not presume too much on his popularity. He will only forfeit that support, and his enemies will reap the benefit. As to the charges of treason and double-dealing against himself, they are false, and the authors of them excommunicate, but if any has been guilty of maladministration and peculation, let impartial inquiry be made by a competent Court, and the guilty punished, according to law. As to himself, he is willing to submit to the judgment of his peers, saving always his rights as primate. "For God's sake, sire," he concluded, "be unwilling to believe of us and your loyal people aught but good, before you know the truth, for if men are to be judged without the right of defence, there will be but one judgment of good and evil alike. . . . And, sire, take it not ill that we write you so largely the truth, for the great affection which we have and always have had towards you, the desire to save your honour and your land, yea, the right which appertains to us, though all unworthy, as primate of England and your spiritual father, incite us to inform you and to warn you as to those things which may imperil your soul, and impoverish your land and your estate."

In all this, Edward's lack of sense is plainly, if affectionately, exposed, and the king is charitably assumed to be the dupe of designing men, on whose

shoulders the responsibility lies. But kings of Edward's stamp do not like to be taken for fools, even if told so with honest intent, and the archbishop's outspoken effusion only embittered the controversy. Edward sent Lord Stafford to Canterbury to demand an explanation of his conduct, and to cite him to attend a council.¹⁸ The archbishop evaded both demands. He was prepared to answer the charges against him, but only before his peers, in legal, constitutional fashion. He declined, too, to receive the envoys of the Duke of Brabant, who, baulked in their efforts to obtain an audience in the priory, publicly summoned the archbishop at the cross outside the gate to repair to Brabant, and there make satisfaction for the debts of the King of England,¹⁹ and boldly continued the crusade on behalf of law and justice. He had other grievances to lay to the charge of the Government, and these he unfolded in a letter to the chancellor, Sir Robert Burghcher.²⁰ The clergy, he complained, were being subjected to intolerable exactions. They were not merely required to pay the tenth granted by Convocation, but were fleeced of the ninth granted by Parliament. These oppressive acts were contrary to the express undertaking of the king, that only clergy who held of him by barony should be liable to pay the ninth, and that all such should be exempt from the tenth. These unjust and vexatious proceedings must be stopped forthwith, and if any commissions had been issued contrary to the conditions of both grants, they must, as far as they

¹⁸ Birchington, p. 22 (4th January).

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23 (18th February).

²⁰ Hemingburgh, ii. 367-369; Walsingham, i. 234-235.

injuriously affected the clergy, be annulled within ten days. In the event of non-compliance, he would take such remedy as the Church provided—in other words, would excommunicate its oppressors. The threat was repeated in a second letter to the king in council, denouncing the illegal imprisonment of both churchmen and laymen, for the purpose of extorting a heavy ransom for their release, and the violation of religious houses and the seizure of their goods, by the rapacious royal officers.²¹ At the same time he enjoined his suffragans to veto these illegal extortions in their dioceses, and to place those guilty of them under the censures of the Church, in the form appended to his circular letters. Should those so censured continue their oppressions, the bishops should refuse to pay the residue of the tenth till the conditions on which it was granted were observed.²²

Edward might contemptuously ignore the archbishop's epistolary activity; he could not afford to ignore public opinion, which was getting ever more excited by this wordy warfare. The competition of both sides for the popular ear reminds us that publicity is an old standing usage of English public life. The political pamphlet was coming into vogue, and the pulpit and the market-place afforded the budding publicist a ready audience. The English Government of the fourteenth century could no more venture to ignore the inborn English interest in political discussions than can a British ministry in the twentieth century remain impervious to the

²¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 369-371; Walsingham, i. 235-237.

²² Wilkins, *Concilia Magnæ Britanniae et Hiberniae*, ii. 659-660, 669-670; Hemingburgh, ii. 371-375 (29th and 30th January).

criticism of some influential party organ which appeals to, and sways the electorate. The pen can do now what the sword or the axe could most expediently do then, as the fate of a Despenser or a Mortimer had so recently shown—obliterate an objectionable minister—, but even then the pen was a power in the land, which might not be neglected with impunity. Edward condescended to state his case to the country in a circular letter to be read from the London pulpits, copy of which was sent to the Priory and Chapter of Canterbury. Therein he, or rather the scribe who penned this *Libellus Famosus*²³—Orlton, Bishop of Winchester, Stratford's arch-enemy²⁴—exhausts the resources of calumny in abuse of the archbishop. The political critic who resorts to the base *rôle* of calumniator, not unknown in this superior age when a General Election heaves in sight, and political partisans are pressed for arguments wherewith to delude an innocent electorate into the patriotic duty of conferring place and power on themselves, is a historic figure. He may proudly claim as company no less a renowned monarch than Edward III., of chivalrous memory, who, let it charitably be hoped, was betrayed by his anger and impulsive nature, and by what he deemed excessive provocation, into the low

²³ *Fœdera*, ii. 1147; *Avesbury*, pp. 330-336; *Wilkins*, *Concilia*, ii. 661-663, where the date is wrongly given as the 13th February 1341—; it should be the 10th, as in the *Fœdera* and *Avesbury*. *Walsingham*, i. 241-247; *Birchington*, pp. 23-27; and *Hemingburgh*, ii. 380-388, date it the 12th February.

²⁴ *Avesbury*, *Litera quam dominus Adam Wyntoniensis episcopus, praefato domino archiepiscopo semper infestus, ad quorundam ipsius archiepiscopi æmulorum instantiam, prout dicebatur a pluribus, fabricavit*, p. 330.

arts of the calumniator. Let the words written in his name bear witness of the invidious fact. By a sublime feat of cool assumption the archbishop is made responsible for both the initiation and failure of the war, the luckless prelate being apparently these five years past absolute ruler of England, and general of the allied army as well! Edward had entered on the struggle for the crown of France at his importunities, and when he was just on the point of succeeding at Tournay yonder, the lack of money, (not for lack of rieving at any rate), which the archbishop had undertaken to send, and had fraudulently kept back, had compelled him to accept a disgraceful truce and expose himself to the derision of his enemies and the mistrust of his allies. Thus had the archbishop dishonoured him, and trailed the national* glory in the gutter. Our veracious scribe is surely scoring here, since English national sentiment was as touchy then as now, and resumes his laudable task with redoubled gusto in the black art of conscious misrepresentation. Edward had leant upon a broken reed, and found himself the beggared creditor of those greedy money-lenders of Flanders, Brabant, and Italy. To vindicate his honour and uphold justice, had he hurried back to England, and placed some of those maladministrators in custody; but the archbishop, the chief of them, whose insolence in prosperity was only equalled by his cowardice in adversity, had withstood his repeated demands to come to a personal interview under the arrogant pretext of stipulating a trial by his peers in full Parliament, and had sneakishly calumniated him and his honest ministers, and

- striven to sow sedition by false accusations of in-

justice and oppression. Verily, to this calumnious, arrogant, and ungrateful prelate might be applied the proverb, "A mouse in your bag, a serpent in your lap, a fire in your bosom." And so on in the same abusive strain, to the length of charging him with corruption in the management of the revenues of the State. The greater part of which, it is needless to add, was not only an *ex parte* statement, but flagrantly false. To pray for an opponent with whom you are in hot controversy, as the archbishop had done, is bad enough, but Edward would have saved his dignity had he eschewed the arts of coarse and false invective, and been satisfied with praying for his antagonist!

Praying was more in the episcopal line, to be sure, and this course the archbishop once more adopted with dignity, and probably with sincerity of heart. He betook himself to the pulpit to preach another sermon applicable to the occasion, and after the abusive letter had been read in the vernacular, for the information of the congregation, refuted or explained it clause by clause, and, acting the part of the strong man, conscious of his innocence, appealed in his turn to the nation by publishing a report of his defence. This disclaimer he repeated in a letter to Edward himself, in which his indignation boils up in denunciation of the libellous malice of his enemies. He permits himself in his anger to say some things on the superiority of the ecclesiastical to the civil power, which smack indeed of prelatic arrogance. "Your royal highness," he bluntly says, "ought to know that you are dependent on the judgment of God's priests, who are not to be directed by your will. For who can doubt that the

priests of Christ are the fathers and masters of kings and princes and of all the faithful." In this he was merely repeating the overweening contention of Pope and prelate from time immemorial; but when he comes to the charges against him, he proves to demonstration that he has been the victim of a base libel, and that, in refusing to obey the royal citation, he was merely shielding himself from the malignity of his detractors, and vindicating his right to a fair trial.²⁵ He had by far the best of the argument, but Edward was not magnanimous enough to be convinced, and rejoined in a furious proclamation,²⁶ in which he rails at his opponent without deigning to answer his arguments, and warns the people against being misled into rebellion by his seditious writings.

Two centuries earlier a similar controversy between king and archbishop had led to the murder of Thomas à Becket. In his resentment Edward would probably not have been sorry had some of these malignant detractors conferred the honour of martyrdom on John Stratford. The archbishop feared this contingency, and some of the chroniclers even go the length of affirming that his enemies were scheming to put him out of the way.²⁷ Edward

²⁵ For the Excusatio of the archbishop see Birchington, pp. 27-36; Wilkins, Concilia, ii. 663-669.

²⁶ Foedera, ii. 1154; Birchington, pp. 36-38 (31st March). He also wrote a denunciatory letter to the Pope (Concilia, ii. 671-672). The story of this famous quarrel is related up to this point in somewhat confused fashion by Barnes (History of Edward III., pp. 211-232). From this charge the narrative of Hook is not altogether free.

²⁷ Et nonnulli in mortem ipsius archiepiscopi in Flandriæ partibus machinarunt (Birchington, p. 20).

happily preserved his reputation from the stain which attaches to that of Henry II., and if murder was bruited by some of these unscrupulous libellers, he was no party to the conspiracy, and braced himself to the disagreeable necessity of facing Parliament on the subject. He had tried to shirk this demand, and had hoped to make Stratford the scapegoat of his own failure. He had been taught the much-needed lesson that an influential Englishman, with public opinion at his back, is always on the winning side against authority, arbitrarily exercised. Besides, he could not afford to make questionable experiments in arbitrary government, with a great war on his hands, and heavy debts to pay. Parliament accordingly met on Monday, the 23rd April,²⁸ and the archbishop came forth from his retreat, under the royal safe-conduct, to answer before his peers for the crimes laid to his charge.²⁹

On the following day, accompanied by the Bishops of London and Chichester, and escorted by an armed guard, he proceeded from Lambeth to Westminster. On approaching the door of the Great Hall, his progress was stopped by Lord Stafford, the seneschal, and Lord John Darcy, the chamberlain of the household, at the head of the king's guards. The archbishop, they insisted, must first answer the charges against him in the Court of Exchequer, before taking his seat in Parliament. Stratford complied so far as to enter the Court and hear the accusations against him read. He was then allowed to enter the Painted Chamber, and in the presence

²⁸ Rot. Par., ii. 126.

²⁹ The account of what follows is taken from Birchington, checked by the Rotuli Par.

of a number of his fellow-peers, declared the reason of his coming to be, *inter alia*, to answer in full Parliament to the crimes publicly imputed to him. Edward was not present. On the morrow he was again absent, and was evidently loth to face the man whom he had calumniated, now that there was no chance of dealing with him in summary fashion, and his libellous statement and arbitrary procedure would be subjected to the scrutiny of Parliament. Reflection, too, had raised doubts as to the policy of his arbitrary methods, in view of the excited state of public feeling and the necessity of carrying Parliament and the country with him in the grand question of foreign affairs. Stratford's enemies had not, however, relaxed their animosity or their efforts to ruin him, and on repairing to Westminster Hall on Friday, the 27th, he was again denied admission by Lord John Darcy, who directed him once more to enter the Court of Exchequer. This time the archbishop was inflexible. "I have been summoned to Parliament," said he, "and will not be denied my right to enter." Darcy gave way, and the archbishop proceeded into the Painted Chamber. But again Edward kept out of the way, and sent the Bishop of Winchester and the chancellor to demand that he should humbly crave his grace. "I have always been a good subject of the king, and ever will be," returned Stratford, "and will render due obedience in all things lawful." Orlton took the opportunity of disclaiming the authorship of the royal circular letter, but the archbishop returned no answer to his Jesuitic explanation, and satisfied himself with facing his detractor with the dignity of a contemptuous silence. On the following day there

was another scene at the door of Westminster Hall. The guards, acting under orders, refused to allow him to pass. "My friends," remonstrated Stratford, "the king has summoned me by his writ to this Parliament, and I, who am the next in rank to the sovereign himself, am resolved to vindicate the right of my church of Canterbury. I demand admission to the Painted Chamber!" The guards repeated their refusal. Whereupon he took his cross out of the hands of the Bishop of Chichester, and declared that he would not move from the spot until the king himself should order otherwise. Anon, Lord Darcy, Sir Egidius Beauchamp, and Sir Thomas Medham, eager to prevent Edward's hand from being forced by this resolute attitude, appeared at the door. "What do you want here?" asked Darcy angrily. "I stand here in vindication of my right," answered Stratford, "and here I will remain till entrance is granted me." "Here is my body," cried he, in answer to the chamberlain, who accused him of rebellion against his liege lord; "I am ready to suffer death for the rights of my Church." "You are not worthy of the cross you bear, or to sit in Parliament," returned Darcy abusively; "you were always a villain and a traitor to your sovereign." "In an evil hour wert thou born, accursed priest!" burst in Beauchamp; "for thou hast resisted the noblest prince in the world, and impeded his affairs." "The curse of God, and the Blessed Virgin, and St Thomas and mine be on their heads who have impeded the king," retorted the archbishop. At this the people began to murmur indignantly, and the knights beat a retreat. Stratford's manful demeanour at last forced Edward from this position of

évasive obstruction. He sent the Earls of Salisbury and Northampton, to whom the archbishop repeated his demand, to intimate compliance. He still refused to meet him, however, and left the hall, while the Bishop of Winchester took up the cudgels on the king's behalf. A violent wrangle followed, during which Orlton, in his dexterous attempt to prove the archbishop a traitor, was convicted of downright falsehood³⁰ by the peers present. The sitting broke up in angry uproar, and his enemies, balked in the attempt to browbeat him or mislead Parliament, then tried to defeat justice by prejudicing public sentiment against him. They presented a series of calumnious articles to the mayor and aldermen, and laid them before the Commons. On Wednesday the archbishop repaired to the hall to answer them, but his detractors, pursuing their obstructive tactics, frequently interrupted him, and managed to get the sitting adjourned amid renewed uproar.

The feeling of the peers was, however, too strongly on his side for these tactics to succeed. The rights of their order were at stake. To disallow the archbishop's contention would be to imperil their own liberties, and place themselves at the mercy of every unscrupulous detractor who happened to have the ear of the king. On the following day, Thursday, the 3rd May,³¹ they appointed a committee (Edward reluctantly consenting) of four

³⁰ De falsitate per pares prædictos convictus fuit super eo quod falso imponebatur dicto archiepiscopo (Birchington, p. 40).

³¹ Bridlington is wrong in saying that this committee was appointed on Tuesday, the 1st May. The Rot. Par., ii. 127, is decisive on this point. Hook, not apparently having consulted the Rotuli for the proceedings against Stratford, has repeated this mistake; see Lives, iv. 61.

earls, four bishops, and four barons, to consider and report on the general question whether a peer of the realm, in office or not, was liable to answer to any charge, except in full Parliament. On Monday, the 7th, the committee unanimously reported in favour of the archbishop's contention,³² virtually, in fact, exculpated him from the charge of contumacy and contempt of the king's majesty, and condemned the arbitrary and malignant tactics that would have deprived him of his legal right to a fair trial. Edward must have keenly felt the embarrassment of the situation. Here he was tacitly convicted of illegal and unconstitutional procedure, and must reckon with the resolute opposition of Parliament if he attempted to continue his tactics. In this dilemma the archbishop magnanimously came to the rescue. He had substantially won his case, and he agreed to save the king's honour, and pave the way to a reconciliation, by formally craving the royal grace in language of due respect. This sham ceremony of whitewashing Edward's bespattered majesty was accordingly performed on the same day³³ in the Painted Chamber, in the presence of the Lords and Commons, who most veraciously protested their gratitude for this shining example of the king's gracious goodness. Thereafter the ill-used prelate prayed that, as he had been notoriously defamed, he should be heard by trial before his peers, in order that his guilt or innocence should be established before the world. This request Edward granted, but bade

³² *Semble d'un assent as Prelatz, Countes, et barouns que les Piers de la terre ne deivent estre aresnez ne menez en juggedment sinoun en Parlement et par lour Piers* (Rot. Par., ii. 127).

³³ Rot. Par., ii. 127; Birchington, p. 41.

him wait till business of more importance had been transacted. Ultimately a commission was appointed to hear his evidence, the king to hold him excused if his answers to the charge against him were deemed satisfactory; if not, the cause to be debated and disposed of in the following Parliament.³⁴ This was of course another royal way of saving appearances, and nothing came of the inquiry. Finally Edward himself vindicated his honour and sought to blot out the remembrance of his own arbitrary impulsiveness and dishonourable tactics by restoring him to his place in the council, and ordering the proceedings against him to be annulled, as "neither reasonable, nor veritable."³⁵

This lengthy and bitter controversy was something more than a personal dispute between an angry king and a high-spirited prelate. It involved principles of far-reaching import in English national life. It is, indeed, one of the landmarks in the history of that struggle for the right of the subject, which was to end in the vindication of the supremacy of law and constitution over autocracy and bureaucracy. Parliamentary government is the aspiration of the fourteenth as of the seventeenth century, and in his resistance to arbitrary oppression, in his advocacy of legal and constitutional right, John Stratford is as assertive as a Pym or a Hampden. His triumph was assured, not only because the occasion was favourable, but because his

³⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 131.

³⁵ Ibid., ii. 139; Murimuth, p. 122, says that peace was finally made between king and archbishop at a meeting of Convocation in St Paul's in October, at the petition of the prelates and certain of the lords; see also Birchington, p. 41.

cause was the expression of that aspiration which pervades the fibre of English history for the last eight hundred years. That this aspiration was a potent force in English national sentiment at this period is evident from the records of this memorable Parliament, which, inspired by the archbishop's example, resolutely wrested from the king the acknowledgment of the supremacy of both law and legislature. In addition to claiming the right of trial by their peers in full Parliament, the Lords insisted that the Great Charter, the Forest Charter, and the privileges of the Church, the franchises of the city of London, and the other cities and burghs of the realm, of the Cinque Ports and the whole commonalty of the land, which had been infringed by the king and his officers, should be observed in every particular, and solemnly reaffirmed in this Parliament. The Commons³⁶ supported the Lords in their petition, and enlarged still more pointedly on the abuses of administration. They insisted (and the Lords endorsed their demand) that the great officers of State—Chancellor, Chief Justices of both Benches, Treasurer, Chancellor and Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Seneschal, Chamberlain, Controller, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Treasurer of the Wardrobe—should be appointed by advice of Parliament, and sworn before the peers, on assuming office, to observe the laws of the land and the provisions of the Great Charter ;

³⁶ It is noticeable that the Commons already form a separate deliberative body, with large powers. The form of procedure at this time was, after debate, to state the measures desiderated, and present them to the king in the form of a series of petitions, who answered each—yes or no, as the case might be—and stated his reasons.

that the accounts of those entrusted with the expenditure of the sums granted to the king since the beginning of the war should be examined; that the recent ordinance of Northampton directing the arrest of malefactors of evil repute, which had been made a pretext for imprisoning many of the king's good lieges, should be repealed; that the conditions on which the ninth was granted be observed to the letter; and that the commissions of inquiry, appointed by the king, without consent of Parliament, which had been guilty of illegal exactions, should be revoked and redress granted.³⁷ The grievances of the clergy, as set forth in the archbishop's letters, formed the subject of another set of petitions presented by the prelates.³⁸ In short, nothing less than a sweeping reform of administration, in accordance with the chartered rights of Englishmen, would satisfy this most public-spirited Parliament, so truly representative of the English national temper in its jealous concern for the liberty of the subject and the supremacy of the law. The king might nominate his ministers, but only by the advice of the Legislature, and those so appointed must be amenable to law and responsible for their public conduct to Parliament. Modern times have not gone further than this on the road to parliamentary supremacy, except to bring a recalcitrant king to his senses by deposition or decapitation. There is indeed a modern ring in this contention which does not sound pleasantly in the ears of a strong-minded monarch, prone to impulsive and high-handed action. He would fain have shirked such large concessions and returned qualified answers. But Parliament was in no mood

³⁷ Rot. Par., ii. 128-129.

³⁸ Ibid., ii. 129.

to suffer evasive courses, and insisted on compliance.³⁹ Supply being indispensable, there was nothing for it but to comply for the most part, with the best grace possible, but with ample mental reservations, and transform the obnoxious petitions into statutes of the realm. On the main point, the responsibility of ministers to Parliament, Edward's words are most explicit. Not only shall they, in case of a vacancy, be appointed by advice of the peers and the council, but they shall be sworn by Parliament to maintain inviolate the law and the constitution. At the beginning of each subsequent Parliament they shall demit office for four or five days⁴⁰ in order that their conduct may be investigated, and in case of default, they may be removed from office and punished by their peers. Against this measure the chancellor and the judges unavailingly protested. They were compelled to submit to the ceremony of being sworn, and Parliament then ordered the ninth, already granted for the second year (Edward having also complied with the conditions stipulated on this head), to be collected with the utmost despatch.⁴¹

This parliamentary victory was very galling to Edward, and unfortunately for his probity, having got a supply, he did not hesitate to repudiate his

³⁹ *Fust avis as ditz Grantz et Communes, que les dites responses ne feurent pas si pleynes et si suffisantes come il convendroit. Par quoi ils prieront au Roi, qu'il lui pleust faire y mettre amende-ment (Rot. Par., ii. 129).*

⁴⁰ *Ibid., ii. 132-133.* From this ordeal the Justices of the King's Bench and Common Pleas, and the Barons of Exchequer, were exempted, but they were made liable to answer before their peers to any charges against them.

⁴¹ *Ibid., ii. 131-134.*

royal word. On the 1st October he issued a proclamation annulling the obnoxious legislation, on his own authority, as derogatory of his prerogative, and contrary to the laws and customs of the realm.⁴² He did not scruple to confess that he had been guilty of deliberate dissimulation in assenting to the demands of Parliament, but attempted to justify it by the plea of State necessity. His refusal would have brought about the dissolution of Parliament, and ruined his affairs, and his advisers had assured him that it was his duty to repeal these unconstitutional statutes. Which he thereby did, saving such articles as might be consonant with his rights as king, and the laws enacted by his predecessors. Here we see the pendulum swinging back to monarchic absolutism with a vengeance, Parliament being coolly told that the king may revoke or revise its enactments as it shall please his supreme prerogative. This outrageous piece of statecraft might be creditable to Edward's dexterity in double dealing; but it was an unmanly, sneakish act, uncommonly like perjury, revealing a deplorable lack of rectitude, and a most reprehensible proneness to treacherous tactics against institutions as well as against individuals.

⁴² *Fœdera*, ii. 1177; *Statutes*, i. 297.

CHAPTER X.

THE DELIVERANCE OF SCOTLAND (1338-1342).

THE situation in Scotland no doubt contributed to Edward's anxiety to avoid friction with his Parliament. During the three years' interval from the death of Sir Andrew Murray, in the spring of 1338, the Scottish patriots had not let the grass grow under their feet. Under his successor, Robert the Steward, whom the Estates elected to the office of warden,¹ there was no slackness in the determination to drive the English beyond the Tweed. While the operations on the French frontier were proceeding in so halting a fashion, there was fierce and unremitting conflict in Scotland, where bold and decisive feats of arms follow each other pell-mell. The war north of the border is no mere parade of great hosts of chivalry which pillage and parley, but have little heart for the shock. There is in it something truly heroic, which our quaint Scottish chronicler has caught in his humble rhymes. His epic, if by no means Homeric, pulsates with an intense national spirit, struggling right heroically to vindicate its hatred of oppression by stout and daring deeds. Men like William Douglas and Alexander Ramsay are actuated by a different spirit from the hireling warriors on the Upper

¹ Wyntoun, ii. 440.

Scheldt, who serve the highest bidder. It is a matter of distant import to these mercenaries whether Edward or Philip be rightful King of France. It is a matter of grim earnest to these bellicose Scots that David Bruce, and not Edward Baliol, be King of Scotland, for it involves their national existence. That Scottish nationality has become a consuming fire, in spite of rivalries and self-seeking, is amply evident from the spirit of our chronicler and the spirit of his heroes: Their restless and resolute activity supplies him with more material for story-telling than he can digest into rhyme. There was plenty of scope for that pugnative pertinacity which struck the far-travelled Froissart as so conspicuous a trait of the nation. "The Scots," says he, "are extremely hardy and strong, and mightily active in arms and in war."² Though Sir Andrew Murray had practically reconquered Scotland north of the Forth, Cupar, Perth, Edinburgh, Stirling, Roxburgh, Lochmaben, and Berwick were still in English hands, and Douglas and his fellow-patriots have sworn that Edward shall not retain a foot of Scottish soil.

The exploits of Douglas are legion. Now he is wielding his ardent spear against Lord Berkeley into the dusk of a hard-fought day at Blackburn, finally slaying his antagonist, whose followers took to their heels, while the doughty Scottish knight himself had but three men left by his side.³ He next appears in hot combat with Sir John Stirling, the governor of Edinburgh Castle, whom he takes captive in spite of stout resistance.⁴ Anon we find

² *Chroniques*, ii. 133.

³ *Wyntoun*, ii. 447.

⁴ *Chron. de Lanercost*, pp. 295-296 (spring of 1338).

him in Crichton Den, bearing down with a hundred horsemen, with loud shouts of defiance, odds notwithstanding, on the English vanguard, and laying about him with forceful arm until, sorely wounded, he is forced to retire at the approach of the main body. Again, at the Black Sollyng (Solway?) he is hard put to it in an unexpected brush with sixty English horsemen, but hastily rallying his scanty following, takes his stand on a brae facing a deep marsh, and bids the foe come on. Full gallop the panting horse dash straight at the brae, to plunge girth deep into the quagmire, which their riders have not noticed, Douglas looking on with sardonic glee. Whereupon the Scottish spears ply fiercely on their disordered ranks, and not a man of them escapes death or capture. Next, upon a certain Yule eve (it must have been Christmas 1341) he is lurking not far from Melrose, where Edward himself is encamped, on the look-out for a convoy on its way thither with the royal Christmas dinner, which he has resolved shall furnish his Yule feast. Anon the dreaded shout resounds, and in a twinkling Douglas and his warriors bar the way. A short struggle, and they make off with the said dinner and its hapless guard, to chuckle over their roast and claret at King Edward's expense. Thus the chronicler merrily plies his homely lyre, telling of the capture of Hermitage Castle; of the slaying of Vans Rolland in a hot tussle, in which Douglas was thrice on the point of death, his sword being knocked from his hand, before he stretched his antagonist dead on the sward; of equally fierce combat with Lawrence of Abernethy, who five times brought him to the ground, but whom by

evening he had taken prisoner.⁵ All this and much more, which the regretful chronicler has not rhymes enough to rehearse, displays the indefatigable Douglas as one of the "bonniest" fighters that Scotland has ever produced.

These were daring feats of personal prowess, dear to popular memory. But more concerted action was needful if the English garrisons were to be ousted from the strong places that commanded the southern half of the kingdom. Of this sort of sustained exploit our chronicler has also plenty to tell, and here, too, his strain is one of triumph. To begin with, there was a huge muster of the fencible men of the country in 1339 for a trial of strength with the English garrison of Perth—better known in those days by the name of Saint Johnstone—where Sir Thomas Ughtred held command for King Edward.⁶ Thither came William, Earl of Ross, with his shaggy Highlanders, and Patrick, Earl of March, with the men of Lothian, and Maurice Murray with those of Clydesdale, and William Bullock, warden of Cupar Castle, who had surrendered his keep to Douglas, and sworn fealty to King David. Douglas himself was there, having just returned from a visit to King David at Chateau Gaillard in Normandy, and brought with him a welcome contingent of French warriors and a squadron of five French ships, under the redoubtable corsair, Hauepyle.⁷ This squadron was moored in the Tay to block the Forth against any attempt to relieve the town from the sea. Thus cut off by land and water, the fate of the

⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 447-450.

⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 1053.

⁷ Wyntoun, ii. 452.

garrison was sealed. Douglas and Earl Patrick, from the South Inch, the Earl of Ross, from the Blackfriars, kept pounding away at the walls with their springalds and ballistas without much effect for a time. The besieged replied in stern defence, wounding Douglas in the thigh with a javelin from a springald, and killing two esquires while directing their archers. Occasionally there was a lull in this artillery duel to give opportunity for a joust between two knights on either side, eager to display their prowess in the presence of the two hosts. Of such chivalrous pastime a shining example was offered by David de Berkeley and John de Brus, who ran three courses against each other with deadly intent, but without fatal result. These polite episodes afforded the English garrison a welcome respite from the harassing toil of defence. On another occasion the fighting was impeded by a total eclipse of the sun, which struck both sides with terror, and leads our learned chronicler to explain to his superstitious countrymen the natural causes of this striking phenomenon. At last Earl William, getting impatient at this lack of progress, bethought him of an expedient which brought matters to a crisis. He set his miners to work to drain off the water from the moat that ran round the earthen walls. Sir Thomas could stand it no longer in face of the clamours of both garrison and townsmen, exposed to the miseries of thirst as well as hunger, and capitulated in October,⁸ on condition of being allowed to retreat across the border. Whereupon the mud walls and other defensive works

⁸ Foedera, ii. 1094, where pardon is granted to Thomas Ughtred for having surrendered the town of St John of Perth. The pardon is dated 29th October 1339.

were levelled to the ground,⁹ and central Scotland saw the last of the English invader for many a day to come. Doubtless with shouts of exultation, mingled with not a few curses, for the country around the Tay had been reduced to a desert. Not a house was left standing for many miles, and the deer herds roamed undisturbed up to the environs of the town. Hundreds had dropped dead of hunger, and the awful picture of desolation is made still more horrible by tales of cannibalism. Popular tradition has preserved, if it has not invented, the name of one brute, who waylaid men and women, and devoured them in his den. The terrible tale with which the chronicler closes this part of his recital is a realistic reminder of the savage side of war, and may serve to tone down the rhapsodies of those panegyrist annalists over the romance and glory of knightly warfare.¹⁰

From Perth the warden marched southwards to lay siege to Stirling, which was held for Edward by Sir Thomas Rokeby. The rocky height on which the castle stands was a far more formidable position than that of Perth, with its mud walls and encircling hills. It had presumably been well supplied, for the possession of Stirling was the main object of every English invasion since the days of Edward I. It commanded the road to the north as well as the

⁹ Wyntoun, ii. 451-454.

¹⁰ Ibid., ii. 454-455. He speaks from hearsay, but he gives the name of the wretch, Christian Klek, and this touch would argue in favour of the truth of the horrible story. In Bower's time tradition had associated a woman with him. The mention of cannibalism, as the result of the ravages of war and plague, is not infrequent in the mediæval chroniclers.

valley of the Forth. Hence the warden's resolute attempt to recapture what might, without exaggeration, be termed the citadel of Scottish liberty, around which cluster the most sacred memories of the struggle for Scottish independence. Siege engines were useless against the solid rock, and a blockade being equally futile, the besiegers attempted to storm the ramparts. To wear out the garrison, they repeated the assault almost every day, with no better effect. The warden lost, too, the co-operation of impatient William of Ross, who, being unable to exercise his engineering skill on the solid rock, gave it up as hopeless, and marched off to his glens. For the present, therefore, he¹¹ left Sir Thomas in possession, and made a progress through the country to exact the oath of allegiance to King David from the small remnant which still held by King Edward, and to take measures for the rehabilitation of the miserable country.

And now Douglas again appears as chief actor on the stage. The castle of Edinburgh was hardly second in strategic importance to Stirling. Perched on its precipitous rock, with a steep approach on the north side only, it was a place of even greater strength, and commanded the fertile district of the Lothians and the eastern highway between north and south. To take it by regular assault was even more hopeless, and provisions could always be had in the neighbourhood for the stealing. Nevertheless, Douglas, who was prowling about among the

¹¹ Wyntoun, ii. 455-456, is wrong in placing the reduction of Stirling as the result of this siege, which he says took place after that of Perth, at this time. It did not surrender till two years later—April 1342.

woods that skirt the hills to the south, was determined that taken it should be, if strategy could do it. With this intent he concocted a daring piece of adventure, worthy of the most resourceful of romancists. He and Walter Currie, a Dundee trader, laid their heads together, not without a chuckle of grim humour, we may be sure, in prospect of the upshot. The said Walter loaded a ship in Dundee, and set forth with a trusty crew on a trading expedition into the North Sea. Among the companions of his voyage were William Fraser, Joachim of Kinbuck, William Bullock, and other knights disguised as sailors and packmen. By-and-by the vessel ran into the Forth, and anchored off Inchkeith, flying the English flag. Getting ashore, Walter appeared one evening at the gate of the castle to tell the porter that an English vessel, of which he was the master, had arrived at Inchkeith with a cargo of merchandise. If my lord the governor would accept a present of wine and victual, he would bring it in the morning; and if he wished more, he was ready to sell any quantity. The porter brought an answer in the affirmative, Walter meanwhile scanning the entrance with careless curiosity. Let him return in the morning, and the governor would be only too glad to traffic with him. "I'll be here early," replied Currie, "and be sure you are ready to receive the stuff." The porter gave an assuring reply, and off strode Walter shorewards, ostensibly to unload his vessel against the morning, sending word to Douglas, who was lying concealed in a hollow near, to be *ready* too. At sunrise on the 15th October ¹² 1341,

¹² Fordun, i. 365, erroneously says the 19th.

the would-be English packmen, twelve in all, leading two horses, one of which bore a couple of panniers carefully covered with cloth, the other, two water-barrels, arrived at the gate. Each man had shaven his beard, in keeping with his ostensible vocation, and donned a carter's frock to conceal his armour, and carried a basket full of provisions. Their disguise was perfect, and the porter at once opened the gate. "Here's the things I spoke of yesterday," said Walter, smartly tumbling down the panniers and the barrels right under the portcullis, while one of his companions stretched the porter dead on the ground. Thereupon a horn blast summoned Douglas from his lair, and roused the sleeping garrison at the same moment. Down rushed the startled governor and his men, to find the gate in possession of the would-be traders in full armour. With desperate efforts they struggled to regain it, but the intruders maintained their grip till Douglas and his followers came panting up the slope, and decided the unequal combat in their favour. In their fear of massacre some of the hapless defenders sprang over the precipitous castle rock; the rest were either slain or taken prisoner. The citizens of Edinburgh crowded up to the gate to reward the victors with their shouts of triumph, and at the tidings of this daring exploit the whole of Scotland re-echoed the note of exultation.¹⁸

The confidence of the Scots in themselves and their cause inspired Alexander Ramsay with

¹⁸ Wyntoun, ii. 459-460; Froissart, iii. 237-243. I have followed Wyntoun in preference to Froissart, who differs in certain details, and whose account of events in Scotland at this time, though graphic, is confused and inexact.

the resolution to carry the war across the border. Ramsay was scarcely second to Douglas as a warrior and patriot, and from his lair in Hawthornden Cave, near his ancestral domain of Dalhousie, he had ventured forth on many a wild adventure. The tidings of his purpose brought to the rendezvous all the daring spirits from far and near. He set out for the border with a strong force, accompanied by such experienced leaders as Haliburton, Hering, and the Earl of March. The remembrance of an unsuccessful foray in the previous year, in which the Scots had had the worst of it,¹⁴ added zest to their eagerness to retaliate the miseries of ten years' bitter oppression at English hands. Not a very glorious mission, truly, but in those days plunder and pillage was the recognised method of indemnification for the loss sustained in war. For days on end, therefore, the invaders wiped out old scores by burning and harrying English manors, farmsteads, and hamlets, until man and pony were loaded to the utmost carrying capacity, and the necessity of retracing their steps called a halt. By this time the wardens of the English marches had got their men together and started in hot pursuit of the marauders. The heavily laden Scots moved but slowly, and ere long their pursuers were upon them in overwhelming numbers. Ramsay's cool eye took in the situation at once. To offer battle was certain defeat. To feign flight and draw the English after them in heedless pursuit, and then suddenly turn at a favour-

¹⁴ Knighton, ii. 17; Baker, pp. 144-145, both mention this Scottish inroad, as to which our chronicler is silent, and both agree in defeating the Scots; otherwise one might assume that they referred to Ramsay's incursion.

able moment and attack their disordered ranks, was the quick thought of the experienced strategist. The word given, away amble the fugitive Scots, their tough ponies galloping their utmost in spite of overloads of English gear, and spreading out on purpose to thin their pursuers—after them, on foot and horse, the men of the northern counties. Then when Ramsay's eye has marked the expected effect, the ponies are halted and wheeled to the foe, and back charge their riders right into the disordered crowd, which pauses and reels at the shock. In a few minutes the flight is all the other way, the English riding their hardest, the Scots pursuing and slashing and taking prisoners to their hearts' content.¹⁵

The Scots were now anxious for the presence of their king, as the crowning triumph of their heroically won independence. Ambassadors were accordingly sent to invite him to assume the sceptre of his great father's kingdom. Both Scotland and its king owed much to the steadfastness with which Philip had championed their cause. But for the intervention of France, and the outbreak of the Anglo-French conflict, Scotland would have been hard beset in the unequal struggle with its southern neighbour, though the evidence it had given of its marvellous powers of resistance, even before Philip threw down the gauntlet, was sufficiently galling to English prestige. Edward would probably have dashed his presumptuous ambition in vain against the high spirit of this fierce and pugnacious little nation, with its woods and its mountains and marshes to back its stub-

¹⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 461-462.

born nationalism, even had he been at liberty to do his worst in the way of reducing the more populated and fertile parts to a desert. A permanent English conquest of Scotland has always proved impossible, because the Scots as a people have ever shown themselves, even when vanquished in the field, worthy of freedom. In this sense their long history has demonstrated that they belong to the elect among the nations, the stream of whose national life is fed from the deep fount of strong character and ardent sentiment. Nevertheless, Philip's chivalry deserves a passing word of recognition, and though it was his interest to cultivate the defiant Scottish spirit, and champion the cause of their young king, his conduct is none the less very handsome from the patriotic point of view. It would ill become us to repeat the depreciative and often malignant aspersions of the English chroniclers and historians because he manfully refused to own himself a usurper at his English vassal's summons, and faithfully championed the rights of his young *protégé* of Scotland. Let even Philip VI. have the blessing of one who speaks the English tongue, as a chivalrous gentleman, in his attitude to Scotland at least, and as far as gentlemen, who happen to be kings, are permitted by the difficulties and responsibilities of office and the exigencies of that ungentlemanly calling, politics, to be. Not only had he watched over the royal exile's education with paternal solicitude; he had initiated him into the art of war in the two campaigns against Edward, and when David landed with Queen Joanna at Inverberrie, on the 2nd June 1341, to receive the warm welcome of his loyal Scots, it was as Philip's sworn ally, and his brother-in-law's sworn enemy. Before

his departure he had renewed¹⁶ his treaty obligation to France. The sequel was to show that while the parade of chivalry at Buironfosse and Tournay had inspired the passion for war and begotten an unfortunate conceit of his own soldierly capacity, it had not made a great commander of him. Nor had nature been prodigal in her endowment of those kingly gifts, for which his subjects looked in the son of so great a father. David was to prove a mediocre king and a weak man. For the present, however, Scotland was charmed with the fair youth ("well waxen up that tyme he was," says Wyntoun¹⁷), fond of the joust and the dance, and other exercises of his years, who meanwhile plays his kingly part among his rude but kindly folk with no little *éclat*.

The report of his arrival was irritating news to Edward. The Scots had contemptuously refused to take advantage of the truce of Esplechin, and here was King David with a goodly company of French knights in his train,¹⁸ come to put the finishing touch to the independence of Scotland in despite of him. Not only so, but the rumour is borne southwards that David is resolved to do Philip a good turn by the invasion of England itself. Edward hastily called a council to excogitate means for frustrating this new danger,¹⁹ and warned the levies north of the Trent to be ready to take the field.²⁰ The Earl of Derby was next sent to take command on the border in

¹⁶ Froissart, iii. 432, et li renouvella les convenenches qui'il avoient entr'iaux doi. He adds that there was great rejoicing and festivity in honour of his arrival at Perth, ou on prent le bon saumon a grant fuison.

¹⁷ ii. 466.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁸ Murimuth, p. 121; Froissart, iv. 435.

²⁰ *Fœdera*, ii. 1172 (August).

place of Edward Baliol, his insignificant pensioner,²¹ with power to negotiate peace.²² Graver news supervening, Edward determined to go north and direct operations himself, and sent forth his summons to the Earls of Northampton, Arundel; Huntingdon, and others, to meet him with their levies at Newcastle.²³

The alarming rumours were only too well founded. Shortly after his arrival, David set about mustering a large army at Perth. By the early autumn its numbers were swelled by mercenary bands from Orkney, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, to the exaggerated total of sixty thousand footmen and three thousand men-at-arms.²⁴ The first enterprise of this formidable force, on marching southwards by Dunfermline, was the siege of Roxburgh Castle, but the stout walls defied assault, and David pushed on into Northumberland, burning and pillaging as far as Newcastle.²⁵ Newcastle, which was defended by a numerous garrison, would not yield to a succession of furious attacks, and the Scots were ultimately compelled to seek some less formidable place on which to vent their vengeance for the losses they had sustained. They accordingly pushed on to Durham,²⁶ ravaging fiercely the intervening country, whose miserable inhabitants fled to the episcopal city for safety.

²¹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1172. Baliol's commission is dated 25th July 1341.

²² *Ibid.*, ii. 1179 (10th October).

²³ *Ibid.*, ii. 1181. The summons is dated Newcastle, 14th November 1341, and was repeated on 4th December. The rendezvous was fixed for the 24th January 1342.

²⁴ Froissart, iii. 437. Knighton (ii. 23) puts the numbers at forty thousand.

²⁵ *Chron. de Lanercost*, p. 335.

²⁶ Knighton, ii. 22.

Assault followed assault, till at last the siege engines, having battered a breach in the walls, the besiegers rushed in and put every soul to the sword, finishing their savage work by burning the cathedral, which the canons had fortified, and all who had sought sanctuary in it, priests and other ecclesiastics included! Let us hope that Froissart, who is not confirmed by the English chroniclers,²⁷ in his striving for effect, coloured the picture too darkly.

Having thus savagely sated their revenge, the booty-laden Scots turned northwards to avoid a collision with Edward, who was by this time in hot march towards Newcastle. They moved in a north-westerly direction, with the intention, according to Froissart, of attacking Carlisle. Their march was unimpeded as far as the castle of Wark on the Upper Tyne, which belonged to the Earl of Salisbury, and was at this time inhabited by his countess, Catherine de Grandison, celebrated in the chronicles as the most beautiful woman in England. The commander of the garrison, Sir William Montacute, the earl's nephew, provoked an attack by an onset on the Scottish rearguard as it resumed its toilsome march on the morrow through a wood near Wark. Two hundred Scots were killed in the skirmish, and their booty-laden horses captured, before William Douglas, the commander of the rearguard, was made aware, by the sight of the fugitives, of the success of this daring exploit. He instantly spurred

²⁷ Knighton, ii. 23, merely says that the "Scots committed many evils," *exercuerunt multa mala*. Wyntoun dismisses the whole expedition in a few lines, mentioning the great array of the Scots, but adding that no fighting worthy of mention took place (ii. 470). He makes the mistake of postdating it, placing it after the capture of Roxburgh.

after the victors, whilst the whole army arrested its march and followed in hot haste, only to find the gate barred, and Montacute and his booty safe behind it. An attempt to scale the walls was beaten back with spirit, the heroic countess showing herself a second Black Agnes of Dunbar by the fearless assiduity with which she incited the valour of the defenders. A second attempt with siege engines on the morrow was equally ineffective. Day after day the Scots toiled in vain at the enterprise, filling the ditches with trees so as to place their artillery as near the walls as possible, and earning only frightful carnage for their pains. Scottish perseverance might have serious consequences, however, if succour should not come to the fair Catherine, and Montacute therefore hazarded himself furth the walls one wild rainy night, when every Scot was under shelter, and spurred away to Newcastle²⁸ to apprise King Edward of the plight of Wark Castle and its fair inmate. Meeting a couple of Scots a few leagues on the road, driving some cattle to the Scottish camp, he charged them, killed the cattle, and bade them go and tell their king that William de Montacute defied him, and would bring King Edward on his track before many suns had set. David was persuaded to forego the adventure of giving battle to the English king under the walls of Wark, and prudently betook himself, with his host, across the border, to await attack in the forest of Selkirk. When Edward reached Wark at mid-day, he discovered that his enemy was already many

²⁸ Froissart says York, but Newcastle is more probable, as we find that Edward was at that town on 5th December (Foedera, ii. 1184).

miles on the road homeward. His march had been quickened by his interest in the fair captive, and this interest blazed into passion when the countess came forth in resplendent beauty and grace to express her gratitude for the prompt deliverance. He would fain have tarried at Wark to play the rôle of romantic wooer (the rascal), but the fair Catherine refused to be seduced by his despairing blandishments from her troth to her absent lord (still a prisoner in the Chatelet at Paris), and Froissart's²⁹ love scene (little creditable to Queen Philippa's husband) ends in the abrupt departure of the baffled lover in pursuit of the Scots.

Unfortunately for him, his fleet, carrying supplies and reinforcements to Berwick, was at this critical juncture dispersed by a storm across the North Sea to Holland and Friesland, or sunk beneath the waves. It was a risky thing to venture into a country where everything eatable and movable that had survived the ravages of the last seven years had been stowed away, in premeditative, "canny" Scottish fashion, behind the stout walls of Scottish keeps, or in the recesses of trackless woods. To feed fifty thousand men, or thereabout—the number at length collected at Berwick and Newcastle—was a dubious experiment. He, nevertheless, determined to risk it, and pushed on from Wark in spite of the bleak winter season, as far as Melrose,³⁰ scaring away the Scots from the siege of Roxburgh at his approach. Here he was in touch with the Scottish army, and

²⁹ Froissart, iii. 429.

³⁰ Foedera, ii. 1184 (27th December). His progress from Newcastle to Melrose must have occupied about three weeks, as the last date of a document issued from Newcastle is 5th December.

once more Froissart shows us two great hosts within striking distance, surveying each other—the English from behind the safe barricade of their baggage waggons—in threatening, yet dubious mood, and engaging in “many a fine bout of arms” in skirmishing fashion. With these chivalrous duels the reader must be content, for here, as at Buironfosse and Tournay, decision fails us in this procrastinating struggle, in spite of vast forces and martial ardour on both sides. On 10th January 1342, Edward was still at Melrose;³¹ twelve days later he was at Morpeth.³² In the interval, a truce, to last till Pentecost, had put an end to these bellicose movements.³³ This arrangement was followed by the negotiation of a truce to last for a year,³⁴ which was subsequently prolonged for three years, in accordance with a stipulation of the treaty of Malestroit.³⁵

• The only tangible result of Edward's grand preparations and his wintry march across the border, was the temporary relief of Roxburgh Castle. Even this petty achievement was nullified three months later by the capture of this southern bulwark of the English pretension to annex Scotland. The hero of this exploit was Alexander Ramsay, who, in the mirk of a March evening, scaled the walls unperceived (Hew of Ednam assisting from within), and overpowered the unsuspecting garrison.³⁶ A fortnight later that of Stirling capitulated after a determined bombardment by formidable siege engines—

³¹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1185.

³² *Ibid.*, ii. 1185.

³³ *Murimuth*, p. 123.

³⁴ *Knighton*, ii. 25; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 1189, 1191.

³⁵ *Fœdera*, ii. 1225 (20th May 1343).

³⁶ *Wyntoun*, ii. 466-467; *Fordun*, i. 365 (30th March 1342).

cannon among them, according to Froissart³⁷—only too glad, now that all hope of succour had vanished, to escape with their lives across the border.³⁸ Lochmaben and Berwick alone remained in English hands, and Edward was left to feed Baliol and his small following of irreconcilables at the expense of the English taxpayer, as the inglorious result of Dupplin and Halidon Hill, and ten years of savage conflict.³⁹

On this occasion, as at Perth and elsewhere, the labours of war were relieved by friendly challenges to break a lance in knightly tilt. These episodes throw a curious light on the spirit of the age. Thus our chronicler blithely interrupts his story to tell of the famous joust between the Earl of Derby and

³⁷ iii. 429.

³⁸ According to the Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland in the Record Office (iii. 252), Stirling capitulated on the 10th April 1342. The siege was already in progress (Rot. Scot., i. 609) in June 1341. The cause of its surrender is given as "defect of victual." The garrison, on the day of its capitulation, consisted of Sir Thomas de Rokeby, Sir Hugh de Montgomri, fifty-seven esquires, ten watchmen, and sixty-two archers.

³⁹ Tytler and Burton have left this part of Scottish history a blank. Froissart (iii. 424-466), who has described these events in detail, is full of confusion and anachronisms. I have striven to correct his account by means of official documents in the *Fœdera*, the *Rotuli Scotiæ*, and the Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland in the Record Office, edited by Bain, vol. iii. Murimuth makes the Scots the worsted party, and says that they retreated beyond the Forth, while the English took much booty and devastated the country far and near (p. 123). Baker is still more patriotic and inaccurate, and makes Edward pursue David beyond the Forth, while the Earl of Salisbury conquered the Isle of Man, and obtained a grant of the island from Edward (pp. 152-153). Salisbury was, however, not released by Philip till the 2nd June 1342, in return for the Earl of Moray. See *Fœdera*, ii. 1140, *et seq.*

William Douglas, in Edward's presence, at Melrose.⁴⁰ Douglas was wounded in the hand by a splinter from his broken spear, but his chivalrous opponent refused to take advantage of this mishap, and insisted on his leaving the lists. The incident closed with an invitation to renew the contest at Berwick, and thither on the appointed day resorted Alexander Ramsay, with a company of ardent knights. Derby, as became so shining an ornament of chivalry, received them with effusive courtesy and hospitality, and for three days they tilted merrily, each man three courses, but not without fatal results, for to kill or be killed even in pastime was a recreation worthy of a true knight in those bellicose days. Strange and brutal ways of taking their pleasures have those fourteenth-century magnates, in whom the pagan fighting instinct is blended with the punctilious profession of a non-pugnacious religious cult. To die in armour, be it even in friendly trial of strength, is the sum of human bliss to Christian knight as to heathen Norseman. When William Ramsay falls from his courser stunned by a spear-blow on the head, the truncheon sticking in his helmet, a priest is brought to shrive him as he lies, apparently dead, in all his knightly array. "Fairer sight can eye not see," cries Derby in his exultation at the spectacle, "than knight or esquire thus shriven in his helmet. Would God, when I shall pass from this life, such a glorious end may be vouchsafed me." Alexander, William's brother, wrenched the truncheon out of the helmet as he lay, and lo! up

⁴⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 441, who puts the incident in 1338, and thus misdates it by three years; cf. Scalachronica, App. 299, and Knighton, ii. 23.

rose the stout knight little the worse. Whereat the earl greatly marvelled and exclaimed, "Lo, stout hearts of men." Truly your sporting athlete was made of tough material in those days! At supper in the evening, a nameless knight passes over the challenge to Sir Patrick Graham, who had honourably borne himself against Sir Richard Talbot that day. "Wilt thou of me have jousting?" cried Sir Patrick. "Rise up betimes and hear a Mass, and get priest to shrive thee, for thou shalt soon delivered be." And at the shock on the morrow Sir Nameless Knight fell to the ground pierced through the body by Sir Patrick's spear! Whereat there is loud congratulation, especially on the Scottish side, which had only one man, John Hay, slain, while two of their opponents had gone to the Walhalla of those fighting days.⁴¹

⁴¹ Wyntoun, ii. 440-446; Scalachronica, App. 299. Knighton and Murimuth both notice this contest, and both place it in the winter of 1341-1342.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR IN BRITTANY (1341-1343).

AS an offset to the vantage ground against Edward which Philip found in Scotland, fortune, or rather death, gave Edward an equally serviceable vantage ground against Philip in Brittany.

It came about in this wise. John III., Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond in the English peerage, fell ill and died at Caen on the road homewards from Tournay, in April 1341. He left no children, and had designated as his heiress Jeanne, daughter of his deceased brother Guy, and spouse of Charles of Blois, Philip's nephew. Her claim was contested by John de Montfort, another brother of the said John III., by a second marriage, his father, Duke Arthur III., having taken to wife for the second time Yolande, widow of Alexander III., King of Scotland,¹ and Countess of Montfort. John de Montfort advanced, in support of his claim, the argument that, being the nearest male relative of John III., the duchy fell by right of descent to him, preferably to Charles of Blois and his wife. This contention raised the old question of the right of female succession, which Philip of Valois had overriden in the case of the French crown. Without

¹ Froissart, iii. 325; Cont. de Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 185-186; Avesbury, p. 339.

waiting for the decision of the Court of Peers, to which the question was referred, John de Montfort immediately took measures to secure at least the right of possession. He first took the precaution of seizing the rich ducal treasure. With this potent argument he succeeded in gaining over the citizens of Nantes. The magistrates of Brittany, however, showed no inclination to obey his summons to do homage, and only one baron, Hervé de Léon, obeyed the citation to appear at Nantes. Nothing abashed, Montfort and his countess assumed the title of Duke and Duchess of Brittany, and lost no time in enforcing the allegiance of the recalcitrant barons. At the head of a large force the self-elected duke began a successful campaign against a number of the "rebel" strongholds. In a couple of months he had reduced or gained over Brest,* Rennes, Hennebont, Jugon, Vannes, Dinan, Roche-Periou, Auray, and other towns and castles. A forcible man of action this John de Montfort. At Rennes, for instance, he had a gibbet erected in front of the walls, and threatened to hang thereon the governor, Henri de Spinefort, whom he had taken prisoner in a skirmish, if the citizens did not forthwith acknowledge his claim. The threat was effective, and Rennes surrendered. A clever stratagem, in which this Henri de Spinefort played the chief rôle, put him in possession of Hennebont. The commander of this impregnable stronghold, Oliver de Spinefort, was a brother of the said Henri. Riding forward with five hundred men-at-arms, Henri sent word to his brother that he had come to pay him a visit, and requested admission. The gates were immediately opened, and the next

moment Oliver was informed by his unconscionable brother that he was a prisoner, and must do homage to John de Montfort.

This energetic action on his own account, without asking the sanction of his liege lord at Paris, prejudiced his cause in the eyes of Philip, who of course favoured the claim of his nephew, and in order to secure the co-operation of an ally powerful enough to protect him from the consequences of his success, Montfort crossed the Channel to confer with Edward .III. He was received with open arms at Windsor, and an alliance was the result. He did not, however, go the length of doing homage during this visit to Edward, as King of France, for his duchy, as the chroniclers erroneously assert.² On his return, he rather rashly, in view of these precipitate tactics, obeyed a summons to appear before the Court of Peers at Paris. Philip received him in the great hall of the palace with reproaches on the score of his presumptuous conduct, particularly his intrigues with Edward. Montfort strenuously rebutted the imputation of treachery, and agreed to remain in Paris for fifteen days, till the Court should give its decision. On his return to his hotel, he became apprehensive of the issue, and stole away by night, in the disguise of a minstrel, back to Nantes. Judgment went, of course, against him by default, Charles of Blois being declared, on the 7th September, rightful duke, in virtue of his marriage with

² Froissart, iii. 371. Walsingham, i. 253, and Avesbury, p. 339, also antedate the act of homage, and place it in 1342. It was not till the 20th May 1345 that Montfort swore fealty to Edward as liege lord (Foedera, iii. 39). Martin (*Histoire de France*, v. 59) repeats this mistake.

the niece of the late John III. Philip thus found it convenient, for political reasons, to reverse the law of succession, in the case of a great feudal possession, which had debarred the claim of Edward; and established his own to the crown of France. He had received considerable provocation for so doing, and it being a cardinal point of self-interest to strengthen his hold, through his nephew, on the duchy, the result would very probably, in any case, have been the same. Montfort might, with some reason, plead his distrust of Philip's impartiality and consistency in justification of his aggressive attitude.

Edward conferred on his ally the earldom of Richmond as compensation for the loss of his county of Montfort, which Philip confiscated.³ He could now pit an Anglo-Breton alliance against the Franco-Scottish alliance, which had borne such galling fruits these ten years past. This Duke of Brittany, so called, was worth far more as an ally than a dozen Ludwigs. He could reckon on the support of the aboriginal population of the duchy—the Bretons-Bretonnants, as they were called, in contrast to the Frenchified Bretons, the Bretons-Galliot of Froissart, who sided with Charles of Blois. Moreover, the Bretons, like the Scots, were a cholerick, fighting race, which had preserved the Celtic temperament in its pristine force. For centuries they had been at feud with each other, or with their neighbours, and would fight with all the passion and devotion of pugnacity inspired by personal feeling. Here, as in Scotland, there

³ *Fœdera*, ii. 1176. The date is 24th September, and the grant was repeated on the 20th February 1342 (*ibid.*, ii. 1187).

will be heroic, if bloody deeds, in plenty to record, no mere parade of mercenary hosts, to which war is a pastime or a matter of pillage and wages. With such pugnacious material ready to his hand at Philip's own door, with the Loire as a counter-check to the Tweed, Edward could hope for a more decisive issue to the campaigns of the future, and set about collecting ships to transport an army under Walter de Manny to Brittany.⁴

In order to make good his right, Charles de Blois assembled at Angers an army of five thousand men-at-arms, under the Duke of Normandy, Louis de la Cerda, commonly known as Louis d'Espagne,⁵ the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon, the Count d'Alençon, and other grand seigneurs, three thousand Genoese under Ayton Doria and Charles Grimaldi, besides a large force of footmen. With this army he invaded Brittany, in the beginning of October 1341,⁶ took Champtoceaux and Carquefou, and laid siege to Nantes. Charles de Blois was a scrupulously pious man—a saint, in fact, of true monkish type, who put pebbles in his shoes, wore a shirt teeming with vermin, and otherwise lacerated his flesh in saintly fashion. He was none the less an implacable enemy, and signalised his advent, as rightful duke, before Nantes, by hurling across the walls from his siege engines the heads of thirty captive Bretons of the opposite party. This grim message of vengeance struck terror into the hearts

⁴ *Fœdera*, ii. 1177 (October 1341); cf. *ibid.*, ii. 1181 and 1187 (10th November, and 20th February 1342).

⁵ He was the grandson of Alphonso X., King of Castille, and his brother was married to a daughter of Charles of Blois.

⁶ See notes to Luce's *Froissart*, ii. 40 (Introduction).

of the citizens, who trembled for the fate of their relatives taken prisoner during a sortie led by Hervé de Léon. With the connivance of Hervé, smarting under Montfort's reproaches at having ventured on this unfortunate enterprise against his express orders, some of the burghers admitted the besiegers by a postern one morning early in November.⁷ Rushing to the castle, they seized Montfort in his bed, and sent him to Paris. Philip spared his life at the intercession of the Count of Flanders, his brother-in-law, and contented himself with keeping him a close prisoner in the Louvre.

The capture of Montfort was a stunning blow to his partisans. His cause must have been lost but for the heroism of his countess, who showed, says Froissart, "the courage of a man and the heart of a lion," and stands out as the bravest woman of a century fertile in heroines. Presenting her little boy, aged seven years, to the citizens of Rennes, she exhorted them to preserve their allegiance in the confidence that they would one day find in him a leader worthy of his father. From Rennes she proceeded to the other cities to confirm the allegiance of their inhabitants by her intrepid eloquence and a still more persuasive liberality, and finally retired behind the strong walls of the castle of Hennebont.⁸ As Charles of Blois

⁷ So Froissart; but Guillaume de Saint André, Montfort's secretary, says that Montfort himself surrendered the town, and was arrested and sent to Paris in contravention of the terms of capitulation.

⁸ For these events see Froissart, iii. 323-424. His account is all the more valuable inasmuch as he devoted special attention to the investigation of the material for this part of his history (see p. 324); cf. Jean le Bel, i. 225-249.

was preparing to renew operations in the spring, she sent her trusty henchman, Amauri de Clisson, to England, to implore the immediate despatch of the promised English succours. Edward, he discovered, hesitated to go the length of breaking the truce and openly defying Philip, but he practically assumed the protectorate of Brittany, and prepared to champion the cause of his ally against Charles, if not formally against Philip. In return, Clisson undertook to place all Breton towns and castles, which had recognised John de Montfort, in his custody during the war, and to advance £1,000 in payment of the expenses of the expedition.⁹ Walter de Manny and Clisson accordingly set sail from Plymouth with a picked force of three hundred lances and two thousand archers. The squadron encountered bad weather, and was kept beating about the coasts of Cornwall and Ireland for fully two months before it at length hove in sight of Hennebont.

In the interval, Charles of Blois resumed operations by the siege of Rennes. Rennes was resolutely defended by William de Cadoudal, but the citizens were not made of the same heroic stuff, and their murmurs at last broke out in open insubordination. The outlook in the presence of a formidable army, which showed no sign of relaxing its efforts to bombard or starve the town into surrender, was sufficiently depressing. "Why," said they, "should we expose ourselves to death and our property to destruction for the Countess of Montfort, whose cause cannot in the end prevail against the

⁹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1189, 10th March 1342. Edward also obtained the right to coin money in Brittany for the use of his subjects there.

power of France." So saying, they presented an ultimatum to the governor. He must either surrender of his own accord, or they would make their own terms in spite of him. The brave Cadoudal would not hear of surrender. Whereupon they clapped him into prison, and sent deputies to treat with Charles of Blois, who ultimately agreed to grant a complete amnesty, and even to allow Cadoudal and his adherents to retire to Hennebont.

Thither Charles followed, to deal, as he hoped, the decisive stroke. Hennebont taken, and the countess a captive, the submission of the whole of Brittany would be an easy enterprise. The heroic spirit of John de Montfort's spouse rose to the occasion, and made the defence of Hennebont one of the grandest episodes in the history of human pluck. The siege began with a preliminary skirmish before the palisades, during which the Genoese and the Spaniards in Charles' army suffered severely. An assault in full force was next resolved. From towards mid-day to nine in the evening siege engines and cross-bowmen played on the walls and the manful garrison behind the ramparts, which unflinchingly returned the discharge throughout all that bloody day. Jeanne de Montfort shared in their toil and their danger. Mounted on a charger, the heroic lady rode from street to street, amid falling bolts and arrows, cheering the brave men on the walls, inciting the women to carry thither stones, bombs (cannon evidently thundering from the ramparts of Hennebont that day), and pots full of boiling pitch. Then climbing into a tower to see how the day was going, and perceiving the deserted camp of the assailants, it occurred to her masculine spirit to essay an ad-

venturous sally on her own account. Collecting three hundred mounted followers, she issued from a postern on the sea side of the town, which was left intact by the besiegers, and passing round unnoticed, suddenly burst on the French camp, put the valets and servants to the sword, and set fire to the tents. In a few minutes the whole encampment was ablaze, and the astonished enemy was rushing back with cries of "Treason, treason!" to save the remainder of their baggage from destruction. Jeanne de Montfort and her gallant escort were by this time in full gallop towards Hennebont, but finding themselves intercepted, they turned their horses towards the castle of Brech,¹⁰ distant four leagues, and in spite of hot pursuit by Louis d'Espagne, galloped within the gate before their pursuers could overtake them. Some days later the plucky countess bethought herself of a new stratagem in order to regain Hennebont in safety. Riding away at midnight, she divided her escort into two companies, directing one, under William de Cadoudal, to make a sham attack on the French camp, whilst she galloped with the other for Hennebont. This stratagem succeeded perfectly. In the confusion of the attack, she dashed up to one of the gates, while Cadoudal, after distracting the attention of the French, retreated in the same direction, and all passed safely in, to the joyous surprise of the disconsolate garrison, which had feared the capture of their heroic mistress.

This galling episode provoked another assault, equally fruitless, Louis d'Espagne was not to be baulked, however, and while Charles proceeded to

¹⁰ See note to Luce's Froissart, ii. 47-48.

invest Auray, which was held for the countess by Oliver and Henry Spinefort, he sent to Rennes for twelve great siege engines, and swore that he would have Hennebont at any cost. A furious bombardment riddled the walls in several places, and it looked as if Louis de la Cerda would have his revenge. Day after day the garrison looked seaward with ever more anxious gaze for some sign of Amauri de Clisson. There was at last nothing for it apparently but to surrender on the best terms possible. Bishop Guy de Leon accordingly commenced *pourparlers* with his nephew Hervé, who had passed over to the side of Charles. At the entreaty of the countess the garrison resolved to procrastinate five days longer, before consenting to the inevitable capitulation. Two days of terrible suspense passed, every eye fixed on the horizon seawards, if perchance it might conjure Amauri de Clisson and his squadron out of the hazy distance. Haste thee, Amauri, for the love of God, else are we undone, is the oft-repeated prayer of the countess as she keeps watch over the wide sea from her lofty tower in the castle. At daybreak on the morning of the third day she rose from her sleepless couch to take post once more in despairing watchfulness by the little tower window. Gracious heaven! what is that away far out on the western horizon? Is it the illusion of hope that has dotted, this morning at last, the sky-line with innumerable specks as of sails? Another intent look to reassure herself, and then her joyful cries break forth from the old tower and ring over the town. "I see the help coming, great God, which I have so long desired to see." In an instant every soul in the castle is at the

windows, while the citizens rush to the ramparts, and there in truth, far out, are descried the ships of Amauri de Clisson, bearing in on Hennebont. Then there was a great blast of trumpets by the castle watch to bear defiance¹¹ to the French camp, as at last the English pennant flying from the masts of Amauri's ships bore unmistakable testimony that English help was at hand. Thereupon the countess went down to the harbour with her attendant cavaliers to offer fitting welcome. "Ah, Amauri," cried she, embracing him affectionately, "what an age have you stayed away, and how have I longed for your return." "Madam," replied the knight, "the fortune of the sea has detained us. The King of England salutes you, and sends these gallant gentlemen to your aid." "Welcome to them, for they bring us much joy," replied the countess, and therewith embraced Walter de Manny and his fellow-knights, and led them to the banqueting hall, and feasted them in regal state, while the minstrels sang in praise of their knightly fame.

The banquet over, Walter de Manny took counsel with the captain of the garrison, if perchance they might together adventure an assault on those formidable engines that were battering away at the walls. The choler of the English knight would not be denied, and towards sundown he sallied out with some hundreds of his trusty archers and an equal number of men-at-arms—English and Breton—and made straight for a particularly obnoxious engine

¹¹ The negotiation was of course at once interrupted, but Bishop Guy de Léon, who represented the countess, went over to Charles of Blois, as his nephew Hervé had done.

close to the walls. The archers, marching ahead, directed a shower of arrows on the men-at-arms and Genoese cross-bowmen who guarded it, and drove them in an instant into flight. Thereupon Walter de Manny's carpenters ran up and hacked it in pieces in a twinkling. Two others were similarly destroyed before the French had time to advance to their protection. In spite of overwhelming odds, the pugnacious Walter would not retreat without a fight. "Never shall I receive the salute of my dear mistress till I have hurled one of the enemy to the ground, or shall myself have been overthrown." So saying, he dashed straight at the head of the French column, his cavaliers following, swords gleaming and sounding in hot combat as they came to the shock. Down went the first line of French horsemen, the spirited scuffle lasting till overwhelming odds compelled the English and Bretons to desist and retreat. Then the archers lined the ditches and poured in their deadly arrows, whilst the men-at-arms turned on their pursuers to charge or receive a counter-charge. Thus fighting, they slowly drew back to the gate, Walter de Manny and his knights ever in the rear with face to the foe, till all had entered.

Minus his siege engines, Louis de la Cerda could make no headway before the walls of Hennebont, and therefore struck his tents and marched away to Auray to rejoin Charles of Blois. Auray defied their united efforts to reduce it in the meantime, and Louis, impatient at this long spell of ill-luck, set out to seek success on his own account. He took Dinan, and laid siege to Guerande. Hard by, in the port of Croisic, he discovered a fleet of wine vessels from La Rochelle. These he seized, and brought round to

co-operate in a grand attack on Guerande, which fell before this combined assault by land and water. The sack of this rich and prosperous town was one of the many horrors of this civil strife. The inhabitants as well as the garrison were butchered, and their houses pillaged and burned to the ground, five of the churches being reduced to ashes by the sacrilegious and savage victors. Louis then embarked in the captured wine ships on a cruise round the coast, burning the seaports and ravaging the surrounding country as far as Quimperlé. News of these ravages being brought to Walter de Manny, he set sail from Hennebont, swept down on the fleet of Louis, who was absent on a marauding expedition in the environs, and seized the booty-laden vessels as they lay at anchor off Quimperlé. He then landed, and followed the smoking track of the marauders. Dividing his force into three "battles," he drew up one division across a highway by which they must return to their ships, and concealed the other two in a thicket close by. Anon the ravagers appeared in the distance retracing their steps towards Quimperlé, followed by a train of waggons laden to the brim with booty. They fell into the trap thus adroitly set for them. Catching sight of the archers and men-at-arms who barred the road, Louis sent forward two esquires to reconnoitre. "Sire," said they, on their return, "they are English and Bretons, for they fly the pennon of Walter de Manny." "We must fight them," replied Louis, "for flee we cannot. Forward, then, in the name of God and St George." Thereupon they rushed to the encounter, Genoese cross-bowmen and English archers plying their bows, while the men-at-arms

struggled in hand-to-hand conflict. Fortune promised to side with Louis, when, suddenly, the two remaining "battles" rushed from the thicket and surrounded his men, wounding and slaying with irresistible fury, and changing incipient success into hopeless disaster. Louis' banner was taken, and his nephew killed; he himself, covered with wounds, only escaped by rushing back for his horse and riding his hardest, with a few followers, in the direction of Quimperlé. Espying a barge anchored in a creek, they sprang on board, and sailed away for Redon, pursued by some English vessels. From Redon they made for Rennes on the first horses that came to hand, English horsemen after them, galloping their utmost, and catching the hindmost ere they could reach the gates, Louis himself barely escaping.

Louis impatiently awaited the opportunity of avenging himself for this sorry mishap. It seemed to have come when Charles of Blois, who had meanwhile reduced Auray, Vannes, and Carhaix, sat down for the second time before Hennebont. In his train were two English knights, Hubert de Frenay and John le Boutillier, taken prisoner during an unsuccessful attack by Walter de Manny on Roche-Periou, after his return from Quimperlé. Louis demanded their heads as an atonement for the death of his nephew. Charles unwillingly complied, Louis being too important a man to be thwarted. Neither his expostulations, nor those of his fellow-captains, availed to shake the determination of the resentful Spaniard. Their heads should pay for his disgrace and his bereavement, and that too under the walls of Hennebont. Tidings of the intended tragedy being brought

to Walter de Manny by the spies who kept the English commander informed of what was going on in the French camp, he resolved to attempt their rescue. Sending Amauri de Clisson with five hundred men-at-arms and one thousand archers to make a front attack on the enemy on the day in question, he himself, with two hundred picked men-at-arms and five hundred mounted archers, sallied forth from the postern on the sea-side, crept round unperceived to the rear of the deserted French camp, slaughtered the guard, and set fire to the tents, and swept back in triumph with the two knights, while De Clisson, after performing his part with equal success, retreated within the walls. This feat was followed by the retreat of Charles to Carhaix. Here he disbanded part of his army. With part of the remainder he laid siege to Jugon, which fell through the treachery of one of the citizens. The near advent of winter promised a cessation of hostilities,¹² when the unwelcome news arrived that a fresh English army had landed at Brest.

Edward had, in fact, by this time, broken off diplomatic relations with Philip, and resolved on a third campaign, this time in Brittany, on his own

¹² For these events see Froissart, iv. 1-121; cf. Jean le Bel, i. 277-317. Froissart says that a truce was concluded between the Countess of Montfort and Charles of Blois to last till May 1343. This appears to be a mistake, as there is no notice of such an arrangement in official documents, except one concluded for a few weeks in the previous March (see Luce's Froissart, iii. 2, where the truce, dated 1st March 1342, is given). Murimuth, however (p. 125), mentions a truce concluded between Walter de Manny and Charles of Blois to last till the Feast of all Saints (1st November). Froissart is equally mistaken in bringing the countess to England at this juncture. Her voyage did not take place till some months later.

behalf as well as that of Jeanne de Montfort. During the past eighteen months the rivals had kept up busy communication of embassies,¹³ renewing the truce at intervals and talking much of peace. Benedict XII., and after his death on the 24th April 1342, Clement VI., his successor on the pontifical throne, had likewise indulged in much benevolent correspondence in the hope of averting another outbreak of hostilities. All which ended in mere rhetoric. While amusing Edward, Philip was striving to detach his allies, and his intrigues succeeded so well that Ludwig cancelled Edward's title of imperial vicar, on the pretext that he had agreed to the truce of Esplechin without asking his sanction.¹⁴ This was in truth no great loss, as Ludwig was at best but a shifty friend, and not to be compared as a fighting quantity with a Jeanne de Montfort, and English gold might be trusted to preserve the adhesion of the magnates of the Low Countries. Edward's reply was accordingly a spirited defence of his conduct. He refused to accept his proffered mediation between himself and Philip, and reminded him that his appointment as vicar was to hold till he had made good his claim to the crown of France.¹⁵ Henceforth he seems to have ignored his imperial sublimity, while cultivating close relations with his imperial allies, and varying his negotiations with Philip by repeated preparations for war. As a set-off to the successful intrigue with the emperor, he strove

¹³ See, for instance, *Foedera*, ii. 1160, 1168, 1169, 1185, 1191, 1196, 1208, 1211.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 1166 (25th June 1341); *Walsingham*, i. 247-248; *Avesbury*, pp. 336-339.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 1167 (14th July 1341).

to gain over King Alphonso of Castille, the Duke of Genoa, the King of Majorca, and the King of Aragon.¹⁶ He gave up his intention of conquering Scotland for the present, and directed all his energies to a third trial of strength with his antagonist across the Channel. The despatch of Walter de Manny to Brittany was a tacit declaration of war. To draw the sword against a vassal who had been proclaimed the rightful claimant to the duchy by the Court of Peers, and had done homage to his overlord, was to make war on Philip himself. Philip retaliated by sending a fleet to ravage the Channel Islands,¹⁷ and seize English merchantmen.¹⁸ On this Edward once more assumed his self-imposed functions as French king, and commissioned the Earl of Northampton, as his lieutenant in Brittany and France, to receive the allegiance of the French people, and grant honours and pensions in his name!¹⁹

Northampton set sail from Portsmouth about the end of July with a fleet of 260 vessels.²¹ He was accompanied by Robert of Artois, the Earls of Oxford and Devonshire, and Lord Stafford; and to judge from the size of the fleet, must have been in

¹⁶ *Fœdera*, ii. 1187, 1207, 1211.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ii. 1199 (8th June 1342).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 1202.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 1204-1206 (20th and 22nd July 1342).

²⁰ Murimuth, p. 126; Froissart (iv. 137-138), whose account of this expedition is very confused. He misdates it by a year (1343 instead of 1342), makes no mention of Northampton, and places Robert of Artois in command, who is accompanied by the Countess of Montfort! Reference to official documents and the English chroniclers has enabled me to correct and supplement his account. Cf. Knighton, ii. 25 (who expressly says that Robert d'Artois accompanied Northampton); Murimuth, p. 125; Baker, p. 154, who wrongly dates it 1344.

command of a considerable force.²¹ To intercept this formidable armament, Philip ordered Charles d'Espagne, brother of Louis, and Ayton Doria, to cruise off Guernsey. Here, somewhere between this island and the Breton coast, the hostile fleets met, and, according to Froissart,²² a fierce encounter was the result. The French, though greatly inferior in numbers, had the advantage of larger vessels. The combat opened, as usual, with the deadly discharge of the archers, which was answered by Doria's Genoese cross-bowmen, and then the fleets drawing abreast each other, a bloody hand-to-hand conflict was maintained with equal fury on both sides till a black mist, which gathered over them towards sundown, dissolved itself in tempest and thunder and rain torrents, and separated the combatants in the darkness. The English thereupon made for the land. In the morning the French fleet, which had taken four English ships laden with provisions, was nowhere to be seen, and was driven right across the Bay of Biscay to the coast of Navarre.

²¹ Froissart says one thousand men-at-arms and two thousand archers, in his account of Robert of Artois' expedition. Murimuth (p. 125) has only five hundred men-at-arms and one thousand archers. According to the *Chronique Normande*, the fleet carried forty thousand men ! (p. 54).

²² Froissart is the only chronicler who gives a detailed account of the naval battle that followed. The English chroniclers are silent on the subject. Jean le Bel (ii. 11) mentions the battle, but denounces the exaggerations of a lying jongleur, and does not hazard a description. The *Chronique Normande* (pp. 54-55) adds that the English were defeated. Froissart, one is inclined to suspect, was merely retailing a popular story ; yet his description is so detailed that I give it for what it is worth. In the fourth version he says, however, that Robert d'Artois and the countess escaped an encounter with Louis' fleet, which was scattered by a tempest (iv. 143).

On approaching Brest, Northampton found it blockaded by fourteen huge galleys, and invested by a large army under Charles of Blois. Three of the galleys at once made for the open sea; the other eleven, which retired into a narrow creek, were captured and burned, after their crews had hastily scrambled ashore. Charles did not venture to dispute the landing of the army, but marched off inland, and Northampton, after sending back the fleet to transport the king himself with a fresh force, set out eastwards to lay siege to Morlaix. The news of this movement decided Charles to retrace his steps and hurry to its relief with an army of twenty thousand men.²³ The garrison of Morlaix repelled a grand assault with severe loss, and Northampton, afraid of being crushed between the town and the advancing French army, set out to meet Charles on advantageous ground of his own selection. This position, which was protected by a wood, he strengthened by digging pits and ditches around it, and covering them with grass. On came the great French host in three divisions, on the 30th September, Geoffrey de Charney, one of the most renowned of French cavaliers, leading the way, only to be thrown into confusion by the arrows of the English archers. Then there was a pause, during which Charles took council with his captains. The spectacle of a handful of Englishmen standing at bay in apparent desperation was too much for their Gallic choler, and setting spurs to their horses, they dashed straight at the English position. In a twinkling the foremost horsemen tumbled into the hidden pits in front of the English ranks, those behind following

²³ Knighton, ii. 25; Murimuth, p. 127.

suit, and the greater part of that magnificent body of cavaliers became a struggling, huddled mass, on which English spears and arrows played with frightful effect. Again there was a pause, followed by a third charge, and desperate fighting to retrieve this disaster, and pierce the solid English ranks, before Charles, who was ere long deserted by the greater part of his host, could bring himself to abandon the reeking field. Many knights and a multitude of their followers were crushed or slain; many more were taken prisoner, among them Geoffrey de Charney himself. The combat was equally honourable to both sides, if we may trust the testimony of an English chronicler who cannot be accused of a partiality for the French. "The battle was fought on both sides," says Baker,²⁴ "with a stubbornness not equalled at Halidon Hill, or Crecy, or Poitiers." In spite of the victory, the English commander feared to move from his position, owing to the superior numbers of the French, who hovered about his encampment and cut off supplies. He had made the mistake of dividing his force, and sending Robert of Artois, who was joined by Walter de Manny from Hennebont, to besiege Vannes, where he was mortally wounded.²⁵

It was the news of Northampton's predicament that hastened the departure of Edward himself with reinforcements. On the 4th of October he went down to Sandwich²⁶ in expectation of the return of

²⁴ p. 155; see also Murimuth, pp. 126-129; Knighton, ii. 25-26.

²⁵ Froissart, iv. 160; Knighton, ii. 26; Fœdera, ii. 1222. According to Froissart, Robert d'Artois succeeded in taking Vannes, but it was retaken by the French, and it was during this attack that he was killed.

²⁶ Fœdera, ii. 1212.

the fleet from Brest. Three weeks passed, and no fleet came. In his anxiety at the news from Brittany, he seized whatever vessels came to hand, and marching to Portsmouth, embarked on the 23rd in this improvised fleet of four hundred sail, with six thousand men-at-arms—Germans and Flemings among them—and twelve thousand archers.²⁷ On the 30th he landed at Brest, and after resting a few days in a mansion belonging to John de Montfort, he began his march into the interior. His object being to conciliate the Bretons, he refrained from pillage,²⁸ and his politic forbearance was rewarded by the accession of a number of Breton magnates and cities to his side. Oliver de Clisson, the lords of Loyat, Machecoul, Retz, Rieux, and others thus changed sides, and the citizens of Ploermel, Malesroit, and Redon opened their gates.²⁹ Rohan and Pontivy, which refused to surrender, were reduced and sacked by Northampton.³⁰

Continuing his prosperous march, he reached Vannes about the beginning of December. Vannes was held by the Count of Valentinois, who chose to stand a siege rather than surrender. Edward accordingly halted to compel its capitulation, Vannes being second in importance only to Nantes. But he repeated Northampton's mistake of dividing his forces, and attempting too much, being anxious apparently to signalise his advent by a series of brilliant feats which should overawe Philip into concessions. Instead of concentrating his strength

²⁷ Murimuth, p. 128.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁹ See Edward's letter to his son, descriptive of the campaign, in Avesbury, pp. 340-342. It is dated from Vannes, 5th December.

³⁰ Knighton, ii. 27.

against one city at a time, he sent Warwick, Northampton, and Hugh le Despenser to besiege Nantes,³¹ and shortly after set off himself with part of the remainder to reinforce Salisbury and Pembroke before Rennes.³² Rennes proving impregnable, he next hurried to Nantes,³³ which was held by Charles of Blois himself, who declined the offer of battle before the walls, in expectation of the arrival of the Duke of Normandy with reinforcements, and repulsed several assaults with severe loss to the besiegers. From Nantes he proceeded in this feverish and ill-calculated hunt after *éclat* to Dinan (more correctly perhaps Guingant), and here his efforts were successful. Dinan was taken by storm and sacked, and (surely without his connivance) many of its inhabitants massacred. To counterbalance this success, Louis de la Cerda pounced upon the English fleet as it lay at anchor in a little port near Vannes, and captured and sank several vessels laden with provisions before succour could arrive from the English camp. More ominous still came the news of the advance of the Duke of Normandy, who had collected a large army at Angers towards the end of November,³⁴ and had relieved Nantes, towards Vannes, at the head of forty thousand men.³⁵ Thereupon Edward was compelled to raise the siege of Rennes, and concentrate his scattered forces at

³¹ Edward's letter in Avesbury.

³² Froissart, iv. 168.

³³ Ibid., iv. 169, *et seq.*; following Jean le Bel, ii. 16. If Edward joined Northampton in the siege of Nantes, it must have been after the 5th December. The English chroniclers do not mention his presence there or at Rennes, but their accounts are very meagre.

³⁴ See Luce's Froissart, ii. 7 (note).

³⁵ Walsingham, i. 254; Chronique Normande, p. 57.

Vannes. Despite the great disparity of numbers, he determined to hold his ground and offer battle. The duke declined the challenge, as King Philip himself was on the march with reinforcements,³⁸ and the inclement season, as well as the increasing dearth of supplies, must ere long force his antagonist to surrender or concede a truce. For the fifth time since the commencement of his reign, Edward stood in presence of a powerful enemy, burning to fight, even against great odds, and for the fifth time his bellicose humour was chafed by the wariness of his foe, and he and the reader must once more be content with a menacing parade in the good old chivalrous style, and a few skirmishes of no importance at all. Edward's situation was none the less a very desperate one. The cold and wet wrought terrible havoc in the hungry English camp; and while the French attacked the English foraging parties, Louis de la Cerda cruised about the coast, and seized the vessels bringing supplies from England. In these unpropitious circumstances, Edward at last yielded to the solicitations of the Cardinals of Clermont and Praeneste, whom Clement VI. had sent to mediate between the belligerents, and agreed to the truce of Malestroit, to last for three years.

Both sides consented to send representatives to argue the matters in dispute between them before the Pope as mediator. Even if his Holiness should be unable to bring about a final decision before the following Christmas, the truce was to continue binding for the period stipulated, the *status quo* to con-

³⁸ Chronique Normande, p. 59. In contrast to Froissart, this chronicler says that the duke accepted the challenge, and the day of battle was fixed for the Thursday after St Martin's Day.

tinue in Brittany, and the truce to include the King of Scotland and the princes of the Low Countries, the people of Spain, Catalonia, Genoa, Provence, Louvain, and the Archbishop of Cambrai. Vannes should be delivered over to the cardinals, and held by them in the name of the Pope during the truce, and the Flemings absolved from the sentence of excommunication. If hostilities should break out in Gascony, neither king to interfere on one side or the other. All prisoners to be released; all sieges to be raised on proclamation of the truce; and commercial intercourse to be resumed between the countries affected by the war. To observe all which my lord Odo, Duke of Burgundy, and my lord Peter, Duke of Bourbon, did swear on the soul of King Philip, and the Earls of Derby, Northampton, and Salisbury on the soul of King Edward, at Malestroit, 19th January 1343.³⁷

With this poor return for the toils of a hard campaign Edward betook himself on board his fleet, and set sail for England, where he only arrived on the 2nd March.³⁸ A frightful gale which dispersed his fleet kept him tossing in the Bay of Biscay for nearly five weeks, and his escape was little short of a miracle. The Countess of Montfort, who embarked at the same time, had a similar terrible experience of that treacherous element, which is no respecter of persons, and ultimately landed on the Devonshire coast.³⁹ It goes without saying that the

³⁷ The treaty is given in the original French by Avesbury, pp. 344-348. Murimuth, pp. 128-134, and Hemingburgh, ii. 397-400, give a Latin translation of it.

³⁸ He landed at Weymouth (Fœdera, ii. 1220; Murimuth, p. 135).

³⁹ Murimuth, p. 135.

gale was the work of Philip's necromancers, and Edward, after hurrying to the Tower to salute the queen, devoutly went on pilgrimage to Canterbury, Walsingham, and Gloucester, in gratitude for his deliverance from the perils raised by their nefarious enchantments.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Murimuth, p. 135. For the campaign in Brittany, from the arrival of Northampton onwards, see Froissart, iv. 137-198; Jean le Bel, ii. 5-18; Knighton, ii. 26-28; Murimuth, pp. 126-135; Avesbury, pp. 339-352; Chronique Normande, pp. 54-59; Baker, pp. 154-155.

CHAPTER XII.

EVENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD DURING THE TRUCE (1343-1345).

THESE pious perambulations ended, Edward met his Parliament on the 28th April to render an account of his doings. The war, Sir Bartholomew Burghersh told the prelates, Lords, and Commons, assembled in the Painted Chamber on the 30th April, had been undertaken by consent of Parliament, and the king did not feel at liberty to enter on negotiations for peace without its permission.¹ This was indeed self-evident, for without the goodwill of Parliament Edward could not fight, and if he could not fight, he need not negotiate. At Avignon, as elsewhere, Providence would probably prove to be on the side of the biggest battalions and the largest purse. This indirect confession of the potency of Parliament was doubtless at the same time intended as a salve for the wound inflicted on parliamentary self-respect by the arbitrary decree of October 1341. At all events, Burghersh's oration was well received, and the Estates proceeded to deliberate on the question whether the king should send envoys to the Pope to negotiate peace or not. On the morrow (Thursday, the 1st May) both Houses assembled in the Painted Chamber to pronounce in favour of the

¹ Rot. Par., ii. 136.

truce and the proposed peace negotiations at Avignon, the Commons adding the assurance that if an honourable peace should not result, they would maintain the quarrel of their sovereign with all their power.²

Parliament then addressed itself, on the invitation of Sir Robert Parning, the chancellor,³ to the consideration of internal questions. The two years' interval since its last meeting had produced a plentiful crop of abuses. It had come to the knowledge of the king, quoth the chancellor, that the people had suffered numerous oppressions during his absence. He was determined that the law should be maintained, and equal justice done to rich and poor, and invited Parliament to devise means to this end. This tacit admission of the right of Parliament to act as guardian of the laws, which Edward had so rudely ignored, was another politic token of his desire to conciliate its goodwill. Both Houses took the question into immediate consideration, and next day the Commons proposed that justices should be appointed to investigate and punish the lawlessness in each county. At the same time, they took care to accentuate their former claim as censor of the administration. Such justices, they insisted, should be selected with the assent of Lords and Commons, and sworn by Parliament to dispense justice honestly, and their commissions shown to both Houses before being sealed.⁴ They added a long list of abuses of which they were to take cognisance, prominent

² Rot. Par., ii. 136.

³ Sir Robert Burghcher or Bouchier had resigned on the 29th October 1341, and Parning was appointed his successor.

⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 136.

among them being the maladministration of the royal officers⁵—collectors of the ninth, customs officers, controllers, &c. Their mission was in fact equivalent to a parliamentary inquisition into the local administration of the country.

Edward did not venture to ask a supply from this Parliament, though, as the plaintive confessions in his letters show, he was desperately hard up, and deep in debt besides. The Commons were none the less importunate in their petitions for concessions bearing on the general welfare. Some of these Edward granted; others he promised to take into consideration—a convenient method of staving off or refusing unwelcome demands. He was evidently a born “parliamentary hand,” a master of the art of polite equivocation not unknown to the parliamentary morality of a later time. He promised once more to observe the Great Charter and the Forest Charter, but no grant being in question on this occasion, he refused point blank to maintain the statute of 1341, in spite of the reminder that it was in recognition of his acceptance of it that Parliament had renewed the ninth. He met the petition with the old subterfuge that the legislation in question was contrary to his oath and the law of the land, and derogatory to the crown. Only such clauses as should be found “honourable and profitable” should be transformed into a new statute, and as there was no question of supply to lend backbone to further controversy over the subject, the Lords and Commons ultimately agreed, but evidently with the greatest reluctance, to repeal the statute themselves on this condition. They pressed him to

⁵ Rot. Par., ii. 137.

make at least a general affirmation that no law passed by Parliament should be repealed, but the wily parliamentary hand put them off with a reference to the foregoing answer. He evaded, too, the demand that the tax on wool should be reduced to half a mark per sack, and that the subsidy of 40s. a sack granted by the merchants to the king without consent of Commons should be abolished, but conceded the petition that the ordinances bearing on the oppression of the royal purveyors and other officials should be put in force. To the demand that "the king should live of his own," to the alleviation of his subjects, and the better prosecution of his wars, he curtly replied that he would act as his council should advise him for his profit.⁶

On the necessity of improving the coinage, and fixing the price of wool, monarch and Parliament were agreed, and several regulations to this effect passed into law. In both weight and quality the English sterling was far below its nominal value, and the merchants who exported goods to Flanders consequently received but a third of the real price. Inferior foreign coins, too, were largely circulated throughout the country. Among the expedients suggested was a reissue of the English sterling, which was on no account to be carried furth the kingdom, but Flemish money of equal value was to have currency in England, and proposals were made for the issue of a gold coin to have circulation in both countries. To bring false and inferior money into the kingdom was to incur forfeiture of life and goods. Money being regarded as the only source

⁶ For the petitions of the Commons and the king's answers, see Rot. Par., ii. 139-143.

of wealth, each merchant was bound to bring back two marks of silver for each sack of wool exported, in order to increase the supply of bullion. Similarly for other goods exported. In keeping with this characteristic legislation, a minimum price for wool was decreed in the several counties, under which no wool should be sold, on pain of forfeiting the same.⁷

There was another matter of even more absorbing importance as to which king and Parliament were of one mind. It concerned primarily the Pope, but it was at the same time a question of deep concern to the nation. Englishmen would plainly no longer stand the abuse of reservations and provisions; in other words, the nomination of aliens to English benefices for the benefit of the Pope and his foreign parasites. On this subject the language of the Commons is most denunciatory. By this device, they complain, English money is distrained into the pockets of a host of foreign priests, lazy dogs most of them, and the king's enemies to boot. But recently, the Pope had assigned English benefices amounting in value to 10,000 marks to fatten two of his new cardinals—one of them the Cardinal de Perigord, Edward's sworn enemy, who was striving with might and main to prejudice the by no means infallible Pope against him. These iniquitous reservations and provisions are, moreover, a hindrance to the promotion of English clerks, "which the Commons neither can nor will longer endure." The Pope must be told so in no uncertain language, and if the Pope prove refractory, the king shall himself see to the protection of his people from the locust

⁷ For this legislation, see Rot, Par., ii, 137-138.

tribe at Avignon.⁸ The English Church should no longer be a sponge to be squeezed from Avignon, when his Holiness was desirous of showering honours and emoluments (for which no work was done) on the creatures of his Court.

Edward was all the more compliant, inasmuch as he had his own feeling of soreness against his French Holiness of Avignon to whet his patriotism. Precedents were not wanting, notably the ordinance passed on this subject by a Parliament held by Edward I. at Carlisle in 1307. At the request of the Lords and Commons, Edward had the records of this Parliament examined, when it was found that, at the request of his Parliament, his grandfather had prohibited this nefarious practice. Whereupon both monarch and Parliament undertook to write to Clement VI. in condemnation of these exactions, and insist on immediate remedy.⁹ The prelates demurred, but were summarily ordered by the king to assent to this drastic action.¹⁰ That of the Parliament, which is dated the 18th May, is respectful but decided. After a few compliments to the Pope by way of preamble, the letter proceeds in plain-spoken reforming style, worthy of the sixteenth century:—
“ And seeing, most holy father, that you cannot have knowledge of the errors and defaults of persons and places so remote, if you be not informed, we, having full cognition of the state of matters in this kingdom, make known to your Holiness that by divers reser-

⁸ See Rot. Par., ii. 144.

⁹ Ibid., ii. 144-145. Edward did not apparently write till 10th September (Fœdera, ii. 1233), and the letter of Parliament was not despatched till then (see Murimuth, p. 149).

¹⁰ Murimuth, p. 138.

vations, provisions, and collations granted by your predecessors, apostles of Rome, and by you, most holy father, in your time, more abundantly than ought to have been done, to various persons, as well to strangers of diverse nations as to some of our enemies even, having no knowledge of the language or of the condition of those of whom they ought to have the government and cure, not to speak of others who are in no way fit to exercise this function, there ensue the following perils and mischiefs—the souls of the parishioners are in peril, the worship of God destroyed, alms distrained, the hospitals impoverished, the churches and buildings belonging thereto fallen into decay, charity restrained, the cure of souls utterly neglected, the devotion of the people hindered, honest people of the realm as well as scholars impoverished, the treasure of the kingdom squandered, and strangers unsuccoured, contrary to the intention and devotion of pious founders. Which errors, abuses, perils, and scandals, most holy father, we cannot and will not longer suffer or endure. We therefore humbly request your Holiness, having duly considered these evils and the perils accruing therefrom, wholly to repel such reservations, provisions, and collations, that the benefices and the rights appertaining to them may be conferred on natives of this kingdom, to the honour of God. And may it please your Holiness to make known your intentions in regard to this request without grievous delay, by your holy letters, understanding for certain that for nothing in the world will we be prevented from our irrevocable determination to apply a remedy for the due correction of this grievance.”¹¹

¹¹ Murimuth, pp. 138-140.

Before the despatch of this letter, Edward by his own authority prohibited the papal proctors from receiving the revenues of two benefices on behalf of the papal nominees, placed them under the custody of the Lord-Lieutenant of London, and finally commanded them to betake themselves out of the kingdom.¹² He next issued a proclamation forbidding the execution of the papal provisions to benefices in favour of aliens,¹³ and ordered the mayors of London and other ports to arrest the bearers of papal bulls arriving from abroad.¹⁴ At last, on the 10th September, he wrote to the Pope, rehearsing anew the evils against which Parliament had remonstrated as derogatory to the rights of the crown as well as hurtful to religion, and reminded him that the Apostolic See had confirmed the right of free election to the English Church granted by Edward's ancestors.¹⁵

On the receipt of these epistles at the hands of Sir John Shoreditch, Clement convened his cardinals. Their contents were not pleasant reading, and greatly offended the sacred college, apprehensive of the loss of its English revenues. Sacrilegious outrage on the privileges of the Pope and the dignity of the Church is the indignant chorus that greets these outspoken English denunciations. Whereat Sir John, who evidently shared the English contempt for these lazy dignitaries of Avignon, whose maintenance kept many an English scholar on starvation allowance, took an abrupt leave,

¹² Murimuth, pp. 142-143 and 150.

¹³ *Fœdera*, ii. 1230.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 1230; cf. ii. 1237.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 1233; cf. ii. 1231; Murimuth, pp. 143-146;

• Hemingburgh, ii. 403.

hieing off to Guienne on more important secular business.¹⁶ Clement seems to have ignored both epistles in the meantime, but he had already written to protest against the treatment of his proctors.¹⁷ These hard-working cardinals, who are burdened with a share of the administration of the Universal Church, must be maintained in accordance with their exalted rank. For Clement and his grasping ecclesiastical princes, apostolic poverty is no mark of apostolic succession, nay, is rank heresy, to be recanted by king and Parliament forthwith on pain of excommunication. If they persist in this heresy their souls are in serious danger of damnation—at Avignon, at least. Even in these superstitious days, however, there is a suspicion, which may grow into a dangerous conviction before the century is at an end, that to be damned at Avignon is not a very serious thing, and that the Pope and his cardinals may be turned into ridicule and laughed at without incurring the curse of Heaven. At all events, in this very year 1343, there is huge delectation of the populace when, at a tournament at Smithfield, the sacred persons of Clement and twelve of his cardinals are introduced in masquerade into the lists, and tilt for three days against all and sundry (the devil probably among the rest), amid the jibes of the mob, which has a keen sense of the religious comedy being played at Avignon.¹⁸ Edward, too, in his own fashion, was equally

¹⁶ Murimuth, p. 149; cf. *Fœdera*, ii. 1236.

¹⁷ See letter dated 28th August, in *ibid.*, pp. 149-152.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146, fuerunt pulchra hastiludia in Smethfeld, ubi Papa et duodecim cardinales per tres dies contra quoscumque tirocinium habuerunt.

drastic in his contempt for the threats of his Holiness. He published a second proclamation against provisions ("said apostolic letters notwithstanding"¹⁹). No papal bull or letter should henceforth have any authority to dispose of the revenues of English cures on pain of severe punishment.²⁰

Clement ultimately deputed the Archbishop of Ravenna and the ex-Bishop of Astorga to remonstrate against this energetic proceeding. Edward received them in audience at Tynham on the 23rd February 1345. On their demand that he should continue to observe the traditional rights of the Pope over the English Church and desist from his attempts to curtail them, he innocently professed ignorance of any intention to infringe the just rights of the Apostolic See. He would, however, institute an inquiry, and if wrong had been done his Holiness, he would have it redressed. With this delightful evasion the papal envoys refused to be satisfied, and in order to get rid of them, he at last flatly told them that he would not abate any of the rights of his crown in the matter of provisions.²¹ He was, however, by no means inflexible in his opposition to papal interference, when it suited his interest to give way. His hostile attitude towards the Pope was in truth partly dictated by his hostility to Philip, whose creature Clement was. Political animosity thus contributed to render the papal power obnoxious to English-

¹⁹ *Dictis literis apostolicis non obstantibus* (Murimuth, p. 153).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154; cf. *Fœdera*, iii. 2 (30th January 1344).

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-162; cf. *Fœdera*, iii. 31.

men in the fourteenth century, as it was to do with far more momentous consequences a hundred and fifty years later. As yet, however, there is too little of the element of principle and personal passion to lend the controversy a persistent motive force. It is only the first faint streak of the Reformation spirit that quivers on the dim horizon of this age, and furtively announces the dawn of a day, still too far off for the world to realise its coming. When it was a question of getting his own nominee pushed into a fat benefice, Edward was ready enough to surrender the rights of chapters and enlist the influence of the Pope on his side, as in the case of the filling of the Sees of Durham and Ely. In this sordid traffic in things sacred, Pope and king shared in unison on occasion, in spite of recriminatory letters and proclamations, and in this unsatisfactory state matters remained in the meantime, to the tribulation of our honest and patriotic chronicler, who thus reflects in bitterness of spirit on these crying abuses. "From these facts," he concludes a review of the exactions of Clement VI. and his immediate predecessors, "it may be inferred to what a degree the Roman See is allowed to suck the wealth of England out of the kingdom, whether directly, or through its cardinals and other creatures of the curia, in whose possession is an enormous number of the best benefices of the land. To such an extent is this so, that it is probable that the amount annually drawn by the Apostolic See and by foreign provisors from the realm of England exceeds the yearly revenue of the king himself. From this source even the enemies of the king are, it is believed, maintained, and therefore one might ironi-

cally apply to the king and the kingdom of England the text in the Epistle to the Corinthians—'Ye suffer wise men gladly seeing that ye yourselves are fools.' Thus among the creatures of the Apostolic See it has become a proverb that the English are good asses, supporting every intolerable burden placed on their backs. Against these things no remedy can be offered by the prelates, since they have almost all owed their promotion to the Apostolic See, and dare not utter a word which might offend the Pope. The king even, and the nobles, who have ordained and enacted remedies against these abuses, act contrary to them in shameless fashion by letters and prayers on behalf of their unworthy favourites . . . and show themselves lukewarm in regard to every effective proposal."²²

The acrimonious discussion of this important question ran parallel with the negotiation for peace. In accordance with the parliamentary mandate, Edward appointed an embassy of high rank to proceed to Avignon to treat with Philip's representatives before the Pope.²³ But difficulties arose at the outset to impede their departure. Edward had already complaints of breaches of the truce to make against Philip, and declined to despatch the embassy without preliminary satisfaction.²⁴ This was not a promising *début*, and his persistence in referring to his antagonist as "Philip of Valois" did not augur any practical result from the proposed colloquy. When at last he consented to

²² Murimuth, pp. 175-176. This chronicler gives a lengthy account of this controversy in a reforming spirit worthy of the sixteenth century.

²³ *Fœdera*, ii. 1224.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 1224.

send envoys of lesser rank,²⁵ they could make no headway towards a satisfactory agreement.

As appears from the report of Ufford, who returned in November 1343, Edward's first concern was for his allies. He insisted on the immediate release of John de Montfort, and the cancelling of the sentence of excommunication against the Flemings, as a preliminary to further discussion. These demands the Pope and the French envoys evaded, and the English plenipotentiaries, under protest, proceeded to the main question—the claim of their sovereign to the crown of France, as the nearest in blood to the late King Charles. Clement, as was to be expected, declared strongly against this pretension, and invited the English envoys to pass to the consideration of the questions of the disputed territories in Guienne and of certain matrimonial alliances between the two royal families. This the Englishmen refused to do, and begged leave to depart for further instructions. Clement, sincerely desirous of preventing bloodshed, however partial to Philip, and apprehensive lest the hitch in the negotiations should be followed by the rupture of the truce, took the precaution of keeping one envoy of each side at Avignon.²⁶ Beyond this tentative stage the negotiations never passed, though several additional embassies were sent, and messengers were kept trotting between Avignon, London, and Paris for another year to negotiate their despatch with fresh instructions.

Complaints of infringements of the truce were

²⁵ According to Murimuth (p. 143), they were John de Grey, a relative of the king, Robert de Herward, Archdeacon of Taunton, and Andrew de Ufford.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149.

meanwhile made by both sides. According to the Pope, Edward was the aggressor.²⁷ English privateers had been raiding the coast of Brittany and other parts of Philip's dominions, and had provoked reprisals. In reply, Edward made a counter-charge of certain "execrable outrages," perpetrated by his adversary, and protested his good faith. He was willing to make amends should the representations of his Holiness turn out, on inquiry, to have any ground in the misconduct of his subjects.²⁸ At the same time he intimated his assent to the prolongation of negotiations till Christmas 1344, and his intention to send the Earls of Derby and Warwick on a new embassy to continue negotiations for peace. The complaint of bad faith against Philip was based on his treachery towards certain Breton magnates. The first victim was Oliver de Clisson, who had signalled his hostility to John de Montfort by his activity in the civil war on behalf of Charles of Blois. In spite of this proof of his allegiance, he was thrown into the Chatelet by the jealous Philip, who accused him of intrigues with the English king, and on the 2nd August 1343 summarily ordered him to execution on a charge of conspiracy. On that day he was accordingly beheaded, and the headless trunk hung on the gibbet of Montfaucon, the head being sent to Nantes to be stuck over one of the gates, as a warning to traitors.²⁹ Four months later (29th November) the sires Geoffrey de Malestroit, John de Montaubon,

²⁷ See letter in *Fœdera*, ii. 1235 (21st September 1343).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 1239 (29th November 1343).

²⁹ For the *procès-verbal* of his execution see Luce's *Froissart*, iii. 9-10 (note); cf. *Chronique Normande*, pp. 58-60, which also accuses Clisson of treason.

Denis du Plessis, Alain de Kedillac, William de Briex, and several other Breton notables, suffered the same arbitrary fate. The nephew of the Lord of Malestroit, who was an ecclesiastic, was degraded and stoned to death by the Paris mob. They were not allowed the benefit of a trial before their peers,³⁰ and their death was a flagrant violation of the law as well as of the truce, compared with which Edward's hasty and arbitrary procedure against his ministers was a mere peccadillo. Philip's treachery and cruelty were indeed as impolitic as they were monstrous. Every chivalrous mind was moved to indignation at this excess of arbitrary power, which shows Philip in the hateful guise of the resentful tyrant. In his wrath Edward swore defiance, and resolved on the immediate resumption of hostilities. He issued orders to the admiral of the fleet west of the Thames to have a squadron ready at Southampton and Dartmouth, by the 2nd January 1344 to convey a force to Brittany.³¹ This bellicose humour did not lead to an immediate rupture, however, for three months later the Earls of Derby and Arundel, who were commissioned on the 24th March 1344 to negotiate foreign alliances, were enjoined to observe the truce.

Instead of renewing the war, Edward summoned his lords and their ladies, and the good citizens of London and their wives, and all the *élite* of European chivalry,³² to a splendid tourna-

³⁰ For the *procès-verbal* of their execution see Luce's Froissart, iii. 10.

³¹ *Fœdera*, ii. 1242.

³² *Ibid.*, ii. 1242, 1st January 1344, where he offers protection to the counts, barons, and other magnates of all nations who desire to be present.

ment at Windsor. It opened with a banquet on Sunday, the 18th January 1344. There was feasting and drinking without stint, and dancing and even kissing (says the chronicler) in the quaint jovial fashion of English chivalry. This hilarious prelude was followed by three days' jousting in brilliant tournament, amid melodies of love and war warbled in the presence of ladies fair and valorous knights by the minstrels, whose recitals were rewarded with rich gifts of gold and silver. Edward himself took part in the joust, amid the plaudits of the galaxy of richly-adorned women who occupied the scaffold that commanded the lists. Renewed festivities closed the triumphs of each hardly-contested day, the contending knights forgetting their rivalries over the banquets, balls, masquerades, and other hilarities that lasted far into the night. On the fifth day, the king, arrayed in a robe of most precious velvet, the crown on his head, with Queen Philippa, the queen mother Isabella, the Prince of Wales, whom he had elevated to this dignity at the Parliament held in the previous May, and the earls, barons, knights—all, too, in magnificent attire—went in procession to hear Mass. Then the procession passed forth, the Earl of Derby, seneschal of England, the Earl of Salisbury, marshal, with their staves of office, leading, the king, sceptre in hand, following, to a spot on which Edward took oath to institute a Round Table after the fashion of King Arthur, to consist of three hundred knights of tried valour and probity. To assist in this undertaking the earls, barons, and knights present, who were reputed worthy of the honour, took similar oath, and then the procession returned to the castle to regale itself with a sumptuous

banquet. The first sitting of the Round Table was appointed for the 23rd May following, and orders given to the royal carpenters and masons to proceed with the erection of the buildings at Windsor Castle.³³

From these knightly diversions Edward was recalled to the reality of political strife by a second violation of the truce on the part of Philip, who, as an offset to the festivities at Windsor, had instituted a Round Table of his own, with similar display of knightly prowess and concomitant festivity, and thus made a counter bid for the services of European chivalry. Philip, it seems, had got notice of intrigues carried on in Normandy by a Norman refugee in Brabant, Geoffrey d'Harcourt, who, it was asserted, aimed at securing, with Edward's help, the duchy for himself. A civil war in Normandy under English auspices, in addition to that of Brittany, was a serious prospect. To forestall this dangerous design he caused three Norman barons to be arrested at Trèguier, whither they had probably resorted for the purpose of conspiring with the partisans of John de Montfort.³⁴ They were condemned, after trial, on the 31st March 1344, on a charge of high treason, and executed three days later. This summary procedure, for which Philip could more legitimately allege the motive of self-defence against traitors, revived the wrath of the English king, who laid this and other

³³ Murimuth, pp. 155-156, 231-232; *Fœdera*, iii. 6; Froissart, iv. 203-206, who erroneously says that Edward instituted the Order of the Garter on this occasion. Its institution did not take place till five years later.

³⁴ See Lettenhove, note to Froissart, iv. 454.

breaches of the truce before Parliament in June. The opening speech of the chancellor was a long invective against the "so-called King of France," pointed by illustrations of his treachery. He recited the stipulations of the truce pertinent to the subject, and showed how Philip had arrested and put to death several of Edward's allies, notably the Breton lords, in despite thereof; had assembled forces in Jersey and Brittany; seized castles and lands owning obedience to the English monarch at the signing of said truce; was busy intriguing against him in Flanders, Brabant, and Germany; nay, was harbouring the plan of invading England itself, and was inciting the Scots to do likewise. These enormities the Lords and Commons promised to take into consideration, and their patriotism being stirred by the skilful reference to a Franco-Scottish invasion, they professed their unanimous readiness to support the king in taking decisive measures. They had evidently lost all patience with the policy of half measures, and urged the king to put an end to these subterfuges either by a decisive battle or by a satisfactory treaty of peace. For this purpose the Commons granted, on certain conditions, with which Edward complied, two-fifteenths for two years for the shires, and two-tenths for the cities and burghs, while the clergy agreed to tax themselves in a tenth for three years.³⁵

While continuing to negotiate at Avignon, he increased his preparations for war, in spite of Clement's strenuous efforts to avert a rupture. The Pope's attitude as mediator had been so biassed that he was regarded as Philip's active, if secret ally,

³⁵ Rot. Par., ii. 150-154.

and his actions construed accordingly. When he appointed Louis de la Cerda Prince of the Canaries, the English ambassador at Avignon concluded that the expedition that was being fitted out, with the papal sanction, for the conquest of these islands, was intended for the invasion of England itself!³⁶ They abruptly left the Papal Court after Easter 1345, and the fruitless palaver of two years came to an end. Edward hesitated no longer. He despatched Lord Stafford³⁷ as his seneschal to Guienne with a squadron from Bristol. The Earl of Derby followed shortly after with a second force, in his capacity as king's lieutenant.³⁸ At the same time he commissioned the Earl of Northampton, as his lieutenant in France and Brittany, with powers to defy Philip of Valois for his violations of the truce.³⁹ He followed up these defiant measures by one still more provoking. On the 20th of May, in the palace of Lambeth, he accepted, in his capacity of King of France, the homage of John de Montfort, who had escaped from his prison at Paris and hastened to England, for the duchy⁴⁰ of Brittany, and shortly after despatched him with Northampton from Porchester to prosecute by force of arms his title to the duchy as well as the right of his liege lord to the French crown. Another refugee, Godfrey de Harcourt, also did homage for his lands in Normandy and Brabant.⁴¹ To the Pope he explained the wrongs which he had suffered at

³⁶ Murimuth, pp. 162-163; Hemingburgh, ii. 415.

³⁷ *Fœdera*, iii. 32 and 36 (April 1343).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 37 and 39 (May 1345); Murimuth, p. 164.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, iii. 36 and 37; Murimuth, p. 164.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, iii. 39; Murimuth, p. 164.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, iii. 44; Baker, p. 158.

the hands of Philip, in respect both of his usurpation of the crown of France and his violation of the truce.⁴² While some of his statements are by no means convincing, there can be no doubt as to his conviction of the righteousness of his cause. The nation, to which the war was becoming unpopular, doubtless, too, believed all the hard things alleged against Philip, and, as the vote of Parliament had shown, was eager to bring matters to a decision once for all. If he could secure in addition the co-operation of the grand alliance which had supported him in his first two campaigns, he might resume the war in person with the confidence of being able to realise the national aspiration. He accordingly summoned his old allies to draw the sword once more in his cause.⁴³ The Flemings, however, had their own quarrels to engross their attention, and before engaging in his fifth campaign he found it necessary to play the *rôle* of mediator between the contentious Flemish cities. Towards the end of June a fleet of 240 vessels, which carried a large force of archers and men-at-arms,⁴⁴ lay ready at Sandwich awaiting his embarkation. Its destination, which was kept secret, was either Brittany or Guienne.⁴⁵ Instead of making for Brittany, the fleet, on the 3rd July, sailed across to Sluys, Edward having, at the last moment, received information of the complication which demanded his presence in Flanders.

Philip had been exerting himself these four years back to break up the Anglo-Flemish alliance, and his henchman, Count Louis, had been doing his utmost

⁴² *Fœdera*, iii. 41 ; cf. iii. 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, iii. 43-44.

⁴⁴ *Murimuth*, p. 168.

⁴⁵ *Fœdera*, iii. 55.

to undermine the influence of Edward's staunch supporter, Jacques d'Artevelde. Edward, too, had not been slack in seeking to maintain his hold on Flanders through the agents whom he despatched from time to time to strengthen D'Artevelde's hands. The count, however, was successful in his efforts to excite dissensions between the various trade guilds, and fan the jealousy of the large cities towards the lesser provincial towns. He actively espoused the cause of the latter against the monopoly of privilege exercised by Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, which restricted in their own interest the free development of provincial industry. He found an influential ally in the Duke of Brabant, who had changed sides and exerted his influence to detach the Flemish cities from the English alliance. Civil war was the unfortunate result. Two months before Edward embarked at Sandwich (2nd May 1345), a bloody struggle had taken place in the streets of Ghent between the guild of the weavers and that of the fullers, while the citizens of Ypres had visited the resistance of those of Poperinghe, who disputed their industrial privileges, with similar sanguinary violence. D'Artevelde, who perceived the fatal consequences of these disputes to the prosperity of Flanders, strove to mediate between the contending parties. His conciliatory efforts brought upon him the enmity of the weavers, and their dean, Gérard Denys, who, from a spirit of factious opposition, now entered into negotiations, hostile to D'Artevelde, with Count Louis and the Duke of Brabant.

Such was the news which determined Edward to shape his course from Sandwich to Sluys, where he arrived on the 5th July. On the 7th, D'Artevelde

arrived at the head of a deputation to invite him to Ghent, but, in haste apparently to pursue his larger designs elsewhere, he preferred to confer with the deputies of the three cities at Sluys. A conference was accordingly held, and the deputies ultimately undertook not to recognise the authority of Count Louis, unless he did homage to Edward as King of France, to confide the direction of affairs meanwhile to a governor (Ruwaert), and to despatch a Flemish army towards Artois in order to support Edward's expedition against France. By this agreement Edward believed that he had stolen a march on Philip and assured the firm alliance of Flanders.⁴⁶ He therefore set sail on the 24th to pursue his voyage to France,⁴⁷ but his purpose was frustrated by a storm, which drove his fleet back on the English coast. Two days later he arrived at Sandwich, having made a narrow escape from disaster.⁴⁸

The confidence that he had succeeded in allaying the discord of the Flemish cities received a rude shock some days later in the news of the murder of D'Artevelde. On the day of his departure from Sluys, D'Artevelde returned to Ghent, and on passing through the streets to his hotel, he observed an ominous change in the attitude of the populace. Instead of the usual signs of respect which had hitherto greeted the popular dictator, he was the object of sullen looks and hostile murmurs. His enemies had been busy, in his absence, poisoning the minds of the citizens against him as a tyrant and a traitor. Had he not conspired to enslave Flanders

⁴⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 55.

⁴⁷ *Ad partes inimicorum nostrorum* (*ibid.*, iii. 55).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 55.

to the King of England, in order the better to play the master over them and usurp the rights of their lawful count? Had he not made offer of Flanders as a duchy for the Prince of Wales? Was there not a force of English archers lying concealed at hand to enable him to achieve his tyrannical designs? Worse still, had he not amassed a great sum out of the count's revenues and sent it to England? This so-called friend of the people is, therefore, a corrupt traitor, who ought to be destroyed for his crimes. These malicious slanders had taken root in the fruitful soil of popular ignorance and passion, which now scowled so darkly on the once popular idol. D'Artevelde read in them the signs of doom, and on reaching his house, barred the doors and windows against attack. Anon the street was packed with a mob, consisting mainly of the workmen belonging to the lesser guilds—among them Gérard Denys, dean of the weavers, and others of his implacable personal enemies. "Render account of your doings at Sluys," cried Denys. "Where is the great treasure of Flanders?" Artevelde appeared at a window and spoke. "Good people, what will ye? In what way have I raised your anger? Tell me, and I shall make all amends in my power!" "Where is the treasure of Flanders?" shouted the mob. "Gentlemen," replied Artevelde, "I have never taken a penny out of the treasury of Flanders. Return to your homes, and to-morrow I shall render a satisfactory account of my actions." "Nay, nay," cried his enemies, "we must have an explanation at once. You shall not escape so. We know for certain that you have filched the treasure to England, and you shall die for it." D'Artevelde clasped his hands

imploringly. "Gentlemen," said he, in broken accents, "you know what manner of man I have been, and you have sworn to protect me against all men, and now you would kill me. You have the power to do as ye list, for I know that a single man has no defence against a multitude. But, for the love of God, consider of it and forget not the great services I have done you till now. Know ye not how all commerce had perished in the land? To me ye owe its revival. I have governed you and guarded the peace so well that ye have all things in plenty." Thereupon there arose a great clamour, all shouting as with one voice, "Leave off your sermonising and come down, for you shall die." Further remonstrance was useless, and D'Artevelde retired from the window to seek by a back door an asylum in a neighbouring church. The courtyard, he found, was also in possession of a yelling mob, which at last burst the door and beat him to death.⁴⁹

The calumnies of his enemies, which led to this insensate outrage, pursued the memory of Artevelde. History has vindicated his character and his life from the aspersions of popular passion and ingratitude, and his countrymen have all too tardily paid tribute to his patriotic devotion by erecting a monument to the founder of their nationality. This expiation he richly deserved. He stands forth to-day, after centuries of misrepresentation, as one of the noblest martyrs of a mad democracy. Artevelde's ambition was the ambition of the enlightened lover

⁴⁹ Froissart, iv. 312-324; Corpus Chron. Flandriæ, i. 216-217, ii. 237-238; Lettenhove, Jacques d'Artevelde, pp. 92-107; Lentz, Jacques van Artevelde, considéré comme Homme politique, pp. 60-80; Murimuth, pp. 169-170.

of his country, so often doomed to atone for his superiority over the petty, envious spirits of his time with the blight of his soaring aspirations. By the alliance with England he rescued Flanders from the maladministration of its count and from the fatal thralldom to France, which tended to stifle the spirit of freedom and nationality and destroy Flemish industry. The confederation of Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault which he negotiated, the energy and foresight with which he strove to foster it, the prosperity which he restored to a blighted industry, are a convincing testimony to his patriotism and his political wisdom. "It was a great pity for Jacques," says the discriminating chronicler, "for he by no means deserved such a fate, having maintained and governed the people of Flanders against all and sundry, right peacefully and sagely, for the space of nine years, as a good guardian against Count Louis, who never did aught of good to the country. It was in truth a wicked enterprise."⁵⁰

While Edward received the tidings of this atrocious deed with profound sorrow and indignation, Philip and Count Louis hailed it as the knell of the Anglo-Flemish alliance. They saw in this tragic event the revulsion of popular feeling in their favour. Louis pushed his advantage by seizing Axel and Hulst. In this reading of the political barometer they were mistaken. The men of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, recovering from their fit of democratic madness, flew to arms, and sent a force to retake these places, and drive the count across the French frontier once more. The Duke of Brabant hastened

⁵⁰ Chronicle of Valenciennes, quoted by Lettenhove, Jacques d'Artevelde, pp. 110-111.

to profess his continued adhesion to the alliance with the Flemish communes, and in the following year the confederation inaugurated by Artevelde was solemnly renewed by the representatives of the three provinces.⁵¹ A deputation was sent to mollify Edward, who, on hearing the news of this outrage, swore to avenge his friend and ally. It disclaimed on behalf of the Flemish communes connivance in the dastardly deed, and assured him of their firm determination to continue the alliance. By this assurance his wrath was assuaged, but he deemed it necessary to send an embassy in October to receive the formal profession of obedience of the Flemish cities "as King of France and lord superior of Flanders."⁵²

The death of the Count of Hainault at the battle of Staveren in Friesland, in September, deprived him of an ally on whose adhesion he could count all the more firmly, as the count was the brother of his own queen Philippa. In default of children from his marriage with a daughter of the Duke of Brabant, Hainault passed to his sister, the Empress of Germany, as nearest heir. Edward all the more eagerly, therefore, resumed negotiations with Ludwig and his son, the Marquis of Brandenburg, for the revival of the league,⁵³ for without the imperial alliance he must forego the co-operation of the men of Hainault. Nothing came of these negotiations, and Edward had the additional mortification of hearing that John of Hainault, his old pensioner, had gone over to Philip. Philip offered a large bribe, and the fact

⁵¹ Lettenhove, Jacques d'Artevelde, p. 113.

⁵² *Fœdera*, iii. 61; cf. Froissart, iv. 317-318.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, iii. 65 (27th December 1345).

that there were dissensions over the inheritance which accrued to Queen Philippa, on the death of her brother, evidently helped to loosen the tie between her uncle and her husband.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See *Fcedera*, iii. 65 and 80; Froissart, iv. 328-331.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAMPAIGN OF CRECY (1345-1346).

EDWARD'S fourth campaign against Philip—the fifth of the war, if we include that against David of Scotland—was intended to be a supreme and decisive effort. It embraced a three-fold invasion of France from Guienne, Brittany, and Flanders, and Philip would find it very hard to play his game of the artful dodger against this elaborate combination. He had not been idle meanwhile, and while endeavouring to parry the impending blow by inciting the Scots to invade England, had already taken the offensive in Guienne and Brittany. Thus in the spring of 1345 events presaged a life and death struggle between the rivals. Events did not augur falsely. The campaign was to add Crecy and Neville's Cross to the list of English victories and French and Scottish defeats.

The Earl of Derby landed at Bayonne, in June 1345,¹ with three thousand archers and men-at-arms, to resume hostilities in Guienne, where the war had hitherto not risen above the level of border

¹ Froissart wrongly dates his arrival in June 1344. For Derby's expedition, see, in addition to Froissart (Lettenhove's edition, t. iv., but especially Luce's edition, t. iii., with its valuable notes), *Etudes sur les Chroniques de Froissart, Guerre de Guinne, 1345-1346*, par M. Bertrand (1870), and *Les Campagnes du Comte de Derby en Guyenne*, par M. Ribadieu; cf. Jean le Bel, ii. 36-43; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 65-74; and the English chroniclers.

skirmishes and reprisals. From Bayonne he marched to Bordeaux, where he was accorded a demonstrative welcome. Not far off, at Bergerac, on the Dordogne, the Count de l'Isle, who had conducted the operations in Guienne and Gascony since the outbreak of the war, had gathered a considerable army. Derby's first exploit was to make a dash at Bergerac. Setting out one morning from Bordeaux, he reached the castle of Moncuq in the evening. On the morrow at dinner the question of an attack was propounded. Said Walter de Manny, "My Lord Derby, if we were worthy of our steel, we should to-night at supper drink the wines of the French lords in garrison at Bergerac." "'Twill not be my fault," returned Derby, "if we drink them not." A shout of applause greeted this bold sally. "Let us to arms then and off to Bergerac!" cried his knights. In a few minutes men and horses stood ready for the signal. "To Bergerac in the name of God and St George!" cried Derby, and the whole force took the road thither, in spite of the sweltering mid-day heat. They found the garrison drawn up in front of the suburbs ready to offer battle. The bloody conflict which ensued was opened as usual by the English archers, whose arrows did deadly execution on the Count de l'Isle's ill-armed levies. Then the men-at-arms charged into the broken ranks of the infantry, and pushed them back on the horsemen behind, slaughtering as they went. The archers, manœuvring skilfully on both sides of the huddled mass, completed the rout. Back went the disordered ranks, foot and horse together, into the suburbs, man and beast falling fast; and finally, after a desperate attempt to rally, across the

bridge within the gate of the city proper. The victors spent the night in the suburbs regaling themselves for the fatigues of the day with the wine and provisions stored there for the use of the garrison in sufficient abundance to feed the English army for two months. On the morrow Derby arrayed his army by sound of trumpet for the assault, but the archers could make no impression on an enemy protected by stone walls, and in the absence of siege engines, the attack failed. They might, however, do more execution on the side enveloped by the Dordogne, which was only protected by palisades, if they could only get boats to carry them across. Barges were accordingly fetched in hot haste from Bordeaux, and the next day an assault was made by water by the Earls of Pembroke and Oxford. While the archers kept playing on the defenders, the occupants of the other boats crept in and commenced to tear down the palisades. A large breach had already been made, in spite of the deadly aim of the Genoese cross-bowmen, when at the entreaty of the citizens, terrified at the prospect of pillage and massacre, the Count de l'Isle agreed to demand a respite till the following day. It was granted on condition that the garrison should not repair the damage done to the defences. During the night the count prudently withdrew to Reole, and when the English returned in their barges to the attack in the morning, the citizens proffered submission, and asked for quarter. Their request granted, they opened the gates, and did homage to King Edward in the person of his lieutenant.²

Derby diligently improved the next two months

² Froissart, iv. 213-234. The date of surrender is the 24th August 1345.

in the reduction of a large number of towns and strongholds held by the French. It would be tedious to retail his exploits, especially as our chronicler repeats himself many times over in his monotonous relation of petty sieges and quick surrenders. The Count de l'Isle was too unenterprising to risk a second encounter after his experiences at Bergerac, and his inactivity at Reole contributed to the easy success of his antagonist. Auberoche, Lisle, and many other towns in Perigord, were taken by assault, or capitulated and did homage to Edward's representative, before Derby withdrew into winter quarters at Bordeaux.

The Count de l'Isle thereupon concluded that he might risk himself beyond the walls of Reole, and mayhap avenge the humiliations of the last two months. He accordingly swept down with a force of ten thousand men on Auberoche, which was held by Frank de Halle. Four formidable engines were kept hurling large masses of rock into the town day and night, which damaged the walls, and killed many of the inhabitants as well as of the garrison. Surrender was inevitable should Derby not hurry to the rescue. But how send word of their desperate plight, seeing that the enemy closely invested the town, and an attempt to steal through their lines seemed hopeless. At length a page declared his willingness to risk it, and stole out one night with a letter from Frank de Halle to Derby. The messenger was stopped by the watch, but his ready wits and correct Gascon accent stood him in good stead, and he was allowed to pass. Before he got clear of the outer line, however, he was seized by some other pages, and interrogated anew by the captain of the

watch. His wits failed him this time, and on being searched, the letter discovered his real character. His audacity was punished with horrible barbarity. He was placed on an engine with the letter tied round his neck, and hurled back into the town. In the morning the Count of Perigord and other cavaliers rode up to the walls. "Ask your messenger who stole away by night whether he found the Earl of Derby ready for the rescue, for he has already returned from his journey," shouted they derisively. And therewith the bombardment recommenced with redoubled fury, the stones crushing against walls and towers "like bolts from heaven." Luckily the Earl of Derby was informed by a spy of Frank de Halle's extremity. Said Walter de Manny, ever ready for the road, "It would be cowardice and villainy to leave the brave garrison of Auberoche to its fate; let us march thither and summon the Earl of Pembroke from Bergerac and raise the siege with our united forces." Derby acquiesced in the bold proposal, and hurried away from Bordeaux with every available man. At Libourne he waited anxiously a whole day for Pembroke, but the earl came not, and delay being fatal, he hurried on without him, marching all night, and arriving at daybreak at a wood within a few leagues of Auberoche. Here he halted in expectation of the hourly approach of Pembroke. Mid-day came, and still there was no sign of the earl. What to do next? Derby's force only numbered one thousand men, and the French were ten or twelve thousand strong. To attack seemed madness, and yet Auberoche must fall within a few hours if relief did not come. The impetuous Walter de Manny again took the lead in the council of war

with a daring project. "My lord," cried he, "let us mount and ride forward under cover of the wood, and suddenly charge the French camp at the hour of supper. We will raise such a confusion that we cannot fail to discomfit them." "So be it," returned Derby, and the stealthy movement began. Towards sundown of the 21st October, while the French were busy preparing the evening meal, the cry of "St George, Guienne!" resounded from the wood, and in another moment the English horsemen appeared galloping down on the camp, pennons flying, and swords and lances gleaming in the setting sun. The camp was transformed by the shock into a scene of indescribable uproar and confusion, some attempting to defend themselves, the greater number fleeing before the charge of those terrible horsemen, who in the first panic were slaughtering at will. Every effort of the Counts de l'Isle, Perigord, Comminges, Valentinois, to rally their men, and stem the rush, was unavailing. A sortie by the garrison completed the rout, and by nightfall Derby was master of the camp. The Count of Valentinois was killed, De l'Isle, Comminges, and many other captains taken prisoner, and their army broken and dispersed without hope of rally. Finally, while Derby and his brave commanders were regaling themselves with the supper unwittingly prepared for them by the vanquished, Pembroke trotted up in great mortification of spirit at the mischance which had deprived him of a share of this achievement. "Welcome, Earl of Pembroke!" cried Derby, laughing, "you have come just in time to sprinkle the holy water on the bodies of the dead."³

³ Froissart, iv. 234-276.

Inspired by this brilliant feat, Derby began a second series of operations, this time southwards into Agennois, along the Lot and Garonne. He divided his army, it would appear, into two forces—one, under Lord Stafford, operating along the former river; the other, under himself, along the latter.⁴ By rapid marches and spirited attacks, varied occasionally by some piece of successful strategy, they obtained possession of St Baseille, Rochemeilhan, Montsegur (Lot-et-Garonne), Aiguillon, Castelsagrat (Tarn-et-Garonne), La Reole, Villefranche, Tonneins, Miramont, Agen,⁵ and several other towns⁶ before their return to Bordeaux in the winter of 1345-1346. Thus the greater part of the region drained by the lower Garonne and its tributaries, the Lot and the Dordogne, was lost to the French invader in six months' time. Philip was stung into activity by the disastrous news, and towards the end of 1345, he summoned the levies of Normandy, Picardy, Bar, Burgundy, Lorraine, Provence, and Languedoc—fifty thousand men in all—to converge at Toulouse, under the command of the Duke of Normandy. In the early spring of 1346, the duke set out to recover lost ground. Against this formidable army the small English garrisons in the captured towns and strongholds were too weak to hold out. Fol-

⁴ See Luce's Froissart, iii. 20. Froissart has got completely muddled in his account of this expedition, both as to chronology and, to some extent, facts.

⁵ Froissart confounds Angouleme with Agen. Derby could not have attacked Angouleme, which lies too far to the north to have been included within the scope of this expedition.

⁶ Baker (pp. 156-157) says that Derby penetrated as far as Toulouse, which he reduced to submission. Though he adds that he had his information from the besieged themselves, it is doubtful whether Derby continued his conquests so far.

lowing the track of Derby's conquests, he retook Miramont, Villefranche, and other fortified towns, and put their English garrisons to the sword. Agen⁷ too was recovered, but its garrison was saved from massacre by a clever subterfuge on the part of its commander, John of Norwich. On the evening before the Purification of Our Lady (2nd February), the said John appeared on the ramparts with the most innocent, pious mien in the world, and making a sign that he wished to parley, requested to speak with the duke or his marshal. Presently the duke trotted up on his palfrey, and John began to enlarge piously on the unseemliness of continuing hostilities on our Lady's Day. The duke welcomed the pious proposal of a truce, and caused the respite to be proclaimed throughout his army. On the morrow, what was his surprise to see John of Norwich issue from the gate at the head of his men, fully armed and equipped as for battle. Great was the commotion in the French camp, both horse soldiers and footmen rushing to arms in expectation of the shock. Then John of Norwich rode forward, a roguish twinkle in his eye. "Gentlemen," cried he, "restrain yourselves; we intend no harm, for to-day there is truce, and we may go whither we list. Ask my lord duke if it be not so." "Let them pass," said the duke, "for I have promised, and will keep faith." Thereupon John of Norwich led his men through the French lines, and rode away to Aiguillon, never more to return to Agen, which surrendered on the morrow.

⁷ The reduction of Agen, if indeed it was in possession of the English at this time, which is at least doubtful, must have taken place before the 3rd February. See Luce's Froissart, iii. 29-31.

Thither the duke followed in April. Aiguillon was an important stronghold situated at the junction of the Lot and the Garonne, and commanding both rivers. The stout old castle stood in an almost impregnable position—"One of the strongest castles in the world," says Froissart, "and admirably situated for defence, for it stood between two large rivers, which flowed one on the right, the other on the left, and met at the point where the castle lay."⁸ Derby had taken care to throw in plentiful supplies, and had entrusted its defence to a garrison of about a thousand men-at-arms and archers, under Lord Stafford,⁹ Walter de Manny, Frank de Halle, the Earl of Pembroke, and other valiant captains. The siege and the defence was one of the great martial feats of the age. "Around the mighty castle of Aiguillon," says Froissart, "was gathered the greatest host that had for long laid siege to a fortress in the kingdom of France or elsewhere, and of no other siege are there so many fine bouts of arms to record." One hundred thousand men is his estimate of the number of the besiegers,¹⁰ and though half this number is probably more correct, Froissart does not exaggerate the celebrity of this shining episode. A brother chronicler, Jean le Bel, compares it to the greatest exploits of Alexander, Charlemagne, and Godfrey de Bouillon!

An indispensable preliminary was the making of a bridge to cross on, the garrison having apparently broken down all means of communication with the

⁸ Froissart, iv. 282.

⁹ Baker, p. 157; Froissart, iv. 283, 337.

¹⁰ Murimuth also gives the number as over 100,000 men (p. 249). Froissart reduces it in another account to 60,000 (iv. 371).

opposite bank of the Garonne. A large number of carpenters accordingly set to work day and night to improvise a bridge. Walter de Manny allowed them to labour their way half across, and then embarking in some boats at a point higher up, swept down and destroyed the construction. The carpenters again set to work under guard of a number of barges filled with Genoese cross-bowmen, and other light troops, and again Walter de Manny swept down, attacked and discomfited the guard, and destroyed the piles of the incipient bridge. This exploit he repeated several times, until the duke so increased the guard that these harassing attacks ceased. The bridge finished, the French army crossed to try the effect of a general assault. A whole day they stormed at the walls in vain, and at evening they were fain to desist and retire with great loss to their camp.

What next? "Let us try an attack in instalments instead of a general assault," suggested one captain, "so as to exhaust the garrison, without wearing out ourselves. Divide the army into four divisions, and send forward a second and fresh division, after the first has delivered an attack, and so on in turn throughout the day." The very thing, opined the council of war with acclamation. The duke gave orders accordingly, and the first division spent its strength in an assault from day-break to nine o'clock. A second then took its place, and maintained the struggle till mid-day. From mid-day till vespers a third took up the task of exhausting the enemy's powers of endurance, and from vespers till darkness set in the task was continued by a fourth. All to no purpose, for English

tenacity, under a Walter de Manny, was indefatigable, and performed miracles of valour and endurance that day, nay, for six days running, during which these harassing tactics were repeated. For six days running did these dogged Englishmen cling to their posts on the walls, fighting by day, repairing the damage by night, and in the waning light of each departing day, the mighty old fortress stood out as strong and defiant as ever. "Those within the castle," says our chronicler, "though worn out beyond measure, never left off for a moment defending themselves, with desperate valour, to the astonishment of the French commanders, who marvelled that their enemy could stand it out so toughly."

There was nothing for it but to try next to batter down the walls. To this end the carpenters set to work once more to construct four of the biggest engines that the world had ever seen. Eight more, likewise very formidable, were brought from Toulouse. Day and night for fully a week on end the twelve monsters kept playing on the castle, hurling huge stones at and over the ramparts. Surely stone and lime and human muscle must succumb beneath this meteoric shower. And yet the duke looked in vain for some sign of yielding, for the besieged were so well protected that hardly a stone took effect, and worked their artillery to such purpose that six of the dozen engines were ere long pounded to pieces. Then swore the duke that he would have Aiguillon at any cost, and offered a large reward to the man who would first lay hands on the drawbridge. A supreme effort to be made by water as well as land, by fresh divisions

as before, should do the thing, if fifty thousand men must die for it. By boat and bridge the divisions swarmed to the attack, one after the other, and at length the occupants of one boat succeeded in tugging down the drawbridge with their grappling irons. The next moment there was a rush across, the eager assailants scrambling and tumbling in heaps of ten or a dozen, and knocking each other into the water, the besieged meanwhile raining down stones, pots full of boiling pitch, and other missiles, crushing, scalding, wounding the struggling mass below, and forcing their assailants to retire with great loss. Evidently these tough Englishmen in their stout old castle were proof against every attack that human ingenuity could devise.

Only one more expedient remained to the stubborn duke, who hit upon a plan which *must* make the effect of overwhelming numbers tell at last. This was to build a number of towers, equal in height to the walls, on as many barges, fill them with armed men, and move them across the river alongside the ramparts. For the third time the carpenters went to work to construct four such floating towers, and at length all was ready. The boats with their lofty superstructures began to move out into the river, when crash came a volley of stones from four martinets erected by the besiegers. Another and yet another, and the towers were shivered in pieces, and the boats filled with dead and wounded men. Before they could be moved out of range, one was knocked to the bottom, and most of the occupants drowned. Ingenuity and persistence could do no more, and the duke was compelled to give it up and withdraw with the remnant of his

host (20th August), leaving his tents and the greater part of his baggage behind.¹¹ His resolution was quickened by the news of Edward's invasion of Normandy. He stole off by night, but this precaution did not prevent his retreat from being harassed by the garrison, which sallied out in pursuit, and attacked and captured his rearguard.¹²

Before raising the siege, the duke had sent messengers to Derby (now, by the death of his father, Earl of Lancaster), to offer a truce. They found him busy collecting troops at Bergerac for the relief of Aiguillon. By this time he had received news of Edward's landing in Normandy, and knowing that this movement would necessitate the abandonment of the siege, he refused the offer. Marching rapidly to Aiguillon, he left two small corps to recover lost ground in the south, and then hastened back northwards, intent on a raid into Saintonge and Poitou, as a diversion in Edward's favour. Rapid success signalised his movements. In less than six weeks (September—October) he had taken Aubeterre, Chateaufort, St Jean d'Angely, Lusignan, and Poitiers, and had received the submission of many other towns. The greater part of south-western France was restored to English rule—no small achievement considering the disparity of numbers. "We have had a beautiful raid, God be thanked,"¹³ wrote he at the end of it. When he returned to London in January 1347, the citizens showed their appreciation of his success by according him a triumphal reception.

¹¹ Avesbury, p. 372.

¹² Baker, p. 158.

¹³ See his letter, giving an account of these operations, in Avesbury, pp. 372-376.

During these operations in Gascony, Edward had been making strenuous preparations to lead a second expedition thither. We have already seen the fleet making sail towards France, after the conference at Sluys. The storm which drove it back to Sandwich frustrated the plan for the present, and it was not till the summer of 1346 that Edward resumed his voyage. The delay, though aggravating, ultimately proved advantageous, as it enabled him to organise and equip an army far superior to the hastily gathered levies on which he had hitherto relied for success. On his return he sent instructions to the sheriffs of counties that all men-at-arms between sixteen and sixty must hold themselves in readiness to accompany him to France.¹⁴ To swell his ranks, he had recourse to the questionable expedient of offering an amnesty to prisoners, on condition of enrolling for foreign service.¹⁵ But experience had taught him that organisation, not numbers, is the indispensable condition of success in protracted military operations in a foreign country, for which the ordinary feudal levies were totally unfitted, and in order to secure a homogeneous and better disciplined army, he determined to enrol a special militia. After consultation with the chief magnates of the kingdom, he ordered a return of the value of lands in each county, and on the basis of this return, landowners and municipalities were made liable to provide so many men armed and equipped for service abroad. Owners of 100s. worth of land were bound to furnish an archer, of £10 a hobbelar or light-armed horseman, of £20

¹⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 55 (3rd August).

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, iii. 57 (28th August).

two hobbelars, of £25 a man-at-arms, and so on in proportion.¹⁶ This body of picked men was paid by the king, and subjected to uniform discipline, and was vastly superior to the ill-disciplined feudal horde that followed the standard of a Philip. Its discipline, esprit de corps, and exceptional physique would, in the hands of a skilful general, prove more than a match for such an enemy, even if, as at Crecy, that enemy was as three to one. As in the great wars of modern times it is the superior system, in the hands of the superior general, that tells. But superior systems are often very grievous things, especially to those who have to pay for them, and in order to make it palatable to the grumblers,¹⁷ he gave a formal assurance that this extraordinary measure should not be held as a precedent, and should lapse with the conclusion of the campaign.

It was not till the beginning of March 1346 that the fleet was got ready at Portsmouth. The weather seemed to be in league with Philip, for once more "horrible tempests" dispersed it, and procrastinated its departure.¹⁸ At length, in the beginning of July, it was ready a second time to embark the troops. Pope Clement had been anxiously following these ominous preparations, and exerting himself to mollify Edward's bellicose humour. In October 1345 came

¹⁶ Murimuth, p. 192. See, for instance, the writ to the Sheriff of Devon, dated 26th February 1346 (French Roll, 20 E. III.), and cf. Wrottesley, Crecy and Calais, who gives the writs of the levies for this expedition, and has thus made a valuable contribution to the military history of the time. Commissions of Array were, however, not first issued by Edward. Edward I. and II. raised bodies of picked men in this fashion. See Stubbs, *Constit. Hist.*, ii. 284-285.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 192 and 198.

¹⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 71.

a long expostulatory letter reproaching him for his remissness in regard to the negotiations at Avignon, and exculpating Philip from the charges of having broken the truce. In executing the Breton nobles Philip had merely visited their treachery with merited punishment. Nor had he countenanced in any way the aggressive actions of Charles of Blois. On the other hand, the expulsion of the papal nuncios from Vannes was an indubitable violation of the truce on Edward's part. In short, in Clement's opinion, insinuated rather than expressed, Edward was to blame both for the failure of the negotiations at Avignon, and for the renewal of hostilities in Brittany.¹⁹ To this lengthy epistle Edward made no reply, pending the arrival of the papal envoy, the Archbishop of Ravenna.²⁰ On his return from a visit of inspection to the border on the 17th December, he gave the archbishop a not very gracious audience in the presence of the council. To his request that he would put a stop to hostilities, and assign date and place for the purpose of renewing the negotiations, Bartholomew Burghersh retorted that as Philip had broken the truce by his treacherous cruelty against the king's allies and other acts of violence, his master no longer held himself bound to observe its terms. Nor could he enter on further conference with the Pope's emissaries without consulting his allies, and as he was resolved to cross the sea to assert his lawful rights by force, the Pope might address further communication to him in foreign parts. To the archbishop's question in what place this audience would be granted, Burghersh curtly answered that

¹⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 53 (21st July 1345); *Murimuth*, pp. 177-188.

²⁰ He merely wrote to intimate this fact (*Fœdera*, iii. 63).

his lord, the King of England, would come with such a retinue that all Christendom would be apprised of his presence, and that the Pope would have no difficulty in discovering his whereabouts.²¹ The well-intentioned Pope made one more despairing effort. He sent a second embassy to beg an interview on the eve of Edward's departure from Porchester, but he refused to see it.²² Poor Clement, the world was growing too modern to mistake the Pope for God's vicegerent, in things political as well as ecclesiastical, and Edward remorselessly shut the door in the face of his cardinals, and prepared to set forth on the warpath on the morrow, July the 3rd. In this matter the English Church evidently went with the king against the Pope, for, as at the commencement of the war, the pulpits again resounded, by royal command, with declamations in proof of the justice of his claim to the crown of France, and the righteousness of his appeal to force.²³

Before embarking, he appointed his son, Lionel, regent during his absence, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London and Winchester, and John de Ufford, who had succeeded Sadyn-ton as chancellor, as his ministers,²⁴ and provided for the defence of the coasts against French attacks by exempting the Channel counties for six leagues from the shore from foreign service. On every hill-top along the southern coast beacons were erected to flash from town to town the tidings of such attempts.²⁵ He sought, too, to guard against the

²¹ Murimuth, pp. 190-192.

²³ Ibid., iii. 72.

²⁵ Ibid., iii. 72.

²² *Fœdera*, iii. 84.

²⁴ Ibid., iii. 84.

exactions and maladministration which had pressed hard on the people during his previous campaign, by stringent regulations against the malpractices of the purveyors of supplies, and, as a warning, had several of these corrupt officials hanged.²⁶ Justice, too, he was determined, should be done in his absence, and the judges were forbidden to accept bribes, or to have respect of persons in the performance of their functions.²⁷

The expedition was probably the most formidable armament that had hitherto left the shores of England. The fleet consisted of 750 ships,²⁸ according to the most modest estimate—that of Murimuth. Our usually reliable chronicler evidently exaggerates the number of men on board, which, including sailors, he sets down at 85,000. Froissart is for once far more moderate, and consequently much nearer the truth, with 4,000 men-at-arms and 10,000 archers, besides Welsh infantry.²⁹ Twenty-five thousand men would probably be within the mark.³⁰ By no means a formidable array, as armies went in those days of feudal hordes, but as Edward's initial intention was to supplement Lancaster's army in Guienne, the expedition was all the

²⁶ Murimuth, pp. 244-245.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

²⁹ iv. 377.

³⁰ According to the accounts of the Treasurer of the Household (given by Wrotesley, Crecy and Calais, pp. 193-204), the number of men of all ranks at the siege of Calais was 32,303, besides 9,355 sailors and 738 ships. Edward had, however, meanwhile received considerable reinforcements, but on the other hand we must allow for the losses sustained in Normandy and at Crecy, which would not be much short of 7,000 men. Only the counties south of the Trent sent contingents; those north of that river being held responsible for the defence of the kingdom against the Scots.

same a most formidable menace to the independence of France. It was invested, too, with all the *éclat* of extraordinary distinction. The Prince of Wales, now a lad of sixteen, accompanied his father, and many of the most distinguished warriors of English chivalry were among the captains of his host. England, it might be said, went with its king on the memorable expedition that was to end in the victory of Crecy and the capture of Calais. Every available warrior of tried prowess was there, and hundreds of ardent young nobles, eager to earn the honour of knighthood, under these tried leaders. The banner of Albion had seldom if ever waved over such a brilliant array of England's strength and valour, and Edward's warrior eye must have gleamed with lordly pride as he surveyed the vast and splendid armament. The Earls of Warwick, Northampton, Huntingdon, Arundel, Pembroke, Suffolk, Oxford, were there, Lords Richard Talbot, Hugh le Despenser, John d'Arcy, Bartholomew Burghersh, Sir Robert Ferrers, Reginald de Cobham, John de Stirling, Maurice de Berkeley, John de Montgomery, William Fitz Warren, Thomas de Ughtred, Robert de Morley, John Maltravers, reputed murderer of Edward II., since pardoned, and many other knights banneret of world renown, and knights by the score, already famous or about to become famous, such as John of Chandos, and even a bishop of bellicose blood, his lordship of Durham, to bless their martial deeds and show how a Christian bishop could fight if need be.

The destination of the expedition was kept secret,³¹ if indeed it was quite clear to Edward him-

³¹ Murimuth, p. 199; cf. Baker, p. 159; and Walsingham, i. 267.

self. His intention at one time was to make for Guienne in order to raise the siege of Aiguillon.³² Whether it was the contrary wind, which kept him beating about the Channel for a week, that decided him, as one chronicler has it,³³ or the representations of the Norman refugee, Godfrey de Harcourt, who accompanied him, and plausibly pointed out the advantages of making a descent on Normandy, as Froissart informs us,³⁴ he finally resolved on the 11th July, being still off the Isle of Wight, to make for St Vaast de la Hogue. At La Hogue, then, on the 12th July, the vast armament turned up. Its coming was not altogether unexpected, for Philip, though ignorant of the English fleet's exact destination, suspected a landing in Normandy. He had therefore taken the precaution to send Marshal Bertrand to occupy St Sauveur, near La Hogue, and the Counts of Eu, constable of France, and Tancarville, the chamberlain, to reinforce the garrison of Caen, in readiness to resist attack. In spite of the vastness of the English armament, Bertrand pluckily attempted to dispute its landing. Without waiting for their horses, the English men-at-arms, following the Earl of Warwick, sprang ashore with the cry of "St George for the King of England!" whilst the archers sent a shower of arrows against their antagonists. In his eagerness to be among the foremost, Edward stumbled and fell. "Sire," remonstrated his lords, "return to your ship, for you are hurt. This is a bad omen for you." "Nay, my lords," said Edward quickly, "it is a good sign indeed.

³² Avesbury, p. 357.

³³ Murimuth, pp. 200-201; cf. Avesbury, p. 357.

³⁴ *iv.* 381.

See ye not that this land desires me, and recognises me as its lord? Forward in the name of God and St George!" The French were overborne by superior numbers and put to flight, with a loss of several hundred killed, Marshal Bertrand himself being severely wounded, and his son slain. In the skirmish the Prince of Wales, Sir William de Montacute, Sir Roger de Mortimer, and several other young warriors, won their spurs, and received the honour of knighthood on the spot.³⁵

Several days were spent at La Hogue disembarking horses and baggage before Edward set his army in motion. It advanced in three divisions, the king and the Prince of Wales with the centre, Godfrey de Harcourt on the right, Warwick on the left, the fleet meanwhile dispersing along the coast to sack Cherbourg, Barfleur, Harfleur, and other towns, and burn the ships found in the harbours. The march of the army by way of Valognes, Carentan, St Lo, and Caen was similarly marked by pillage and outrage, the left and right wings spread-

³⁵ Murimuth, p. 199. It is doubtful whether the French attempted to dispute Edward's landing, although Froissart gives a circumstantial account of the fight in the Amiens version. The chronicler of Valenciennes confirms this account, and the Chronicle of the Chandos Herald also asserts that the French resisted, but were routed. Bartholomew de Burghersh, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says that Warwick skirmished with the enemy successfully, but does not mention it as taking place at the landing of Edward. On the other hand, Murimuth, who gives Burghersh's letter, says that there was no attempt at resistance—"sine resistantia qualicumque." Another correspondent, the Chancellor of St Paul's, ignores the fight, and only mentions several skirmishes which took place shortly after. (See letter in Murimuth, pp. 201-202.) Knighton (ii. 33), however, says that Edward took (cepit) the towns of La Hogue and Barfleur.

ing out over the country on either side, and plundering and burning as they advanced. A rich country in the height of summer, which had enjoyed a long immunity from the ravages of war, offered a tempting booty. The country people fled at their approach, abandoning fat flocks and rich crops, and opulent farmsteads and villages, to be pillaged and wantonly destroyed. The days of what is called civilised warfare were not yet, though this is the much sung age of chivalry. The progress of Edward's army was in fact that of a swarm of brigands. Unfortunately it contained in the vagabonds and criminals whom he had lured to his standard by the offer of pardon, and in the wild Welsh and Irish mercenaries, an element which would not be kept in control by the canons of chivalry. It was not merely a case of each man helping himself as he went to whatever he needed. These brigands scoured the country far and near, plundering, robbing, violating to their hearts' content, filling the carts of the peasants to the brim with spoil, clearing, locust-like, everything of value in their path, and leaving black desolation behind them. There was not even the excuse of resistance to palliate these brutal excesses, for though Edward found the bridges broken down at Carentan and St Lo, the small garrisons made no attempt to bar his progress, and opened the gates. Nevertheless the former, "a town as large as Leicester, and abounding in wine and food," notes our eye-witness, was burned, and the latter, a thriving industrial town, "larger than Lincoln," delivered over to pillage, in spite of the king's efforts to save it, and many of its inhabitants reserved for ransom. "And so," says our correspondent—and he an Englishman—"they

of the host rode on pillaging and laying waste five or six leagues around each day, and leaving many places in ashes."³⁶

At Caen, "a city larger than any English town outside London," and possessing a magnificent castle, there was an attempt at defence, the garrison and the burghers, to the number of thirty thousand, arraying themselves in valorous mood at the bridge across the Orne, which intersects the town. Edward, who had learned from his spies that the bridge was strongly held, drew up his army in imposing array, and ordered an assault. In their eagerness for the fray his divisions fell into confusion, and swept down in headlong movement on the bridge. The French men-at-arms and the burghers held their ground with conspicuous bravery, in spite of the rain of English arrows, and did such execution that at one critical moment, Edward, in the belief that the archers were unsupported by the men-at-arms, sent Warwick to order their withdrawal. On reaching the front, Warwick, disregarding the order, plunged into the fray,³⁷ and when the king himself galloped up, he found a desperate combat proceeding. His presence intensified the fury of the assault, and the men-at-arms pressing forward into the galled ranks of the heroic defenders, finally swept them into the town on the other side of the river. The large number of the slain on the French side is an additional testimony to the obstinacy of the defence, and

³⁶ Michael de Northburgh (Avesbury, pp. 358-360), who wrote home an account of the march from La Hogue to Caen. Edward left La Hogue on the 18th July, and reached Valognes on that day; on the 20th he arrived at Carentan, took St Lo on the 22nd, and reached Caen on the 26th.

³⁷ Knighton, ii. 33-34.

a sufficient answer to the charge of cowardice which Froissart most unjustly brings against the defenders.³⁸ Many knights and esquires were among the dead, who lay in heaps in the streets, gardens, and houses, many more were taken prisoners, the total loss in killed, wounded, and captives being about five thousand, "for which God be thanked," adds our pious correspondent. On the English side, only one knight was wounded, who died two days later. As to the rank and file slain, our correspondents are patriotically silent. Five hundred is the estimate of Froissart.

The fierce struggle at the bridge ended, the work of murder, plunder, and violation began. We are getting case-hardened over the oft-recurring tale of brutality which is the concomitant of this fourteenth-century warfare, but for sheer horror this march from La Hogue to Caen and beyond beats anything we have yet met. So far, at any rate, this march in quest of glory presents a sorry spectacle of savage excess, over which we at all events shall not blow the patriotic trumpet. Disgustingly brutal and reckless is this barbarous method of settling a quarrel which after all concerns only the two individuals who happen to be kings of France and England, and who consign whole provinces to destruction because they cannot agree on a nice point of genealogy. Once more, what a fool of a world is this misguided fourteenth century. Clearly lunatic, and as is always the

³⁸ The letters of Burghersh (in Murimuth, pp. 202-203) and Northburgh (Avesbury, pp. 358-360) render generous tributes to the bravery of the defenders. I have taken this account from these eye-witnesses, compared with Knighton, ii. 33-34. Baker puts the French loss at 1,300 killed, in addition to the knights, of whom 143 were slain and taken prisoner (p. 160).

case with lunatics, unconscious of the fact. Otherwise we should not find sanguinary clerics ascribing to "our Lord" the honour of such savage orgies, and giving thanks to God accordingly. Heigho! what a perverted moral sense sometimes lurks under stole and tunic.

There are one or two chivalrous touches to relieve the brutal picture. "The Constable de Guines and the Chamberlain de Tancarville," says Froissart, "and several other cavaliers, took refuge in the tower above the gate, and when they beheld from the windows the English archers slaying the people without mercy and even without resistance, they were in sore dismay lest they should be seized and killed likewise. Presently they caught sight of an English knight who had only one eye, Thomas de Holland, and half-a-dozen cavaliers along with him, who had formerly been their companions-in-arms in Granada, Prussia, and elsewhere. 'My Lord Thomas,' shouted they, 'speak with us.' When the good knight heard his name called, he stopped and looked up. 'Who are you, sirs,' he asked, 'that call me by name?' 'We are Ralph, Count of Guines and Eu, Constable of France, and John de Melun, Sire de Tancarville. Come up, and we shall yield ourselves your prisoners.' When the good knight heard these words, he was much rejoiced, and mounted into the tower, and made them and their companions prisoners, and promised to protect them. Then leaving them under a guard, he went on into the city, saving many from death, and several fair ladies and nuns from violation by his timely interference." "But," adds our chronicler, "the slaughter and pillage were too horrible to record, and pity it is

to think how Christians could murder each other with such savage delight. At the two extremes of this good town there were two great and rich abbeys, one inhabited by monks, the other by nuns of noble birth, and of these latter a large number was violated, and the two abbeys, along with the greater part of the town, burned down. At which the king was sore displeased, but prevent it he could not, for his soldiers dispersed all over the city in quest of booty, and no man could restrain them.”³⁹

In keeping with the mercenary spirit of the time, the fleet, which had arrived at the mouth of the Orne, was loaded with the spoil of this ten days' raid and a large number of prisoners, and sent across the Channel. Certainly a dubious method of recommending Edward's claim to the people of France, whose patriotism was made only more defiant thereby!⁴⁰ In palliation of this horrible business of murder and violation, Edward produced a document, unearthed very *à propos* at Caen, which might convince the world what a base, treacherous scoundrel was this King Philip. This was an agreement, concluded between Philip and the Norman barons in March 1338, for the invasion and conquest of England, with an army of forty-five thousand men. The English crown was to pass to the Duke of Normandy, and the lands of the English nobility to the Norman lords, the rights of the Scottish crown and the

³⁹ iv. 405-419. Burghersh says that the Count d'Eu alone gave himself up to Thomas Holland, while the Count of Tancarville was captured by a squire in the suite of Prince Edward.

⁴⁰ These excesses created a profound indignation throughout France. “Par fumieres li Engles ne le bouteroient jamis hors de son heritage,” was the consoling assurance of Philip's advisers (Froissart, iv. 424).

independence of Scotland being at the same time guaranteed. There were minute details as to the equipment, maintenance, and conduct of the expedition, which must have been startling reading to Edward and his lords. It did not occur to them that in point of moral culpability there was no difference between a French invasion of England and an English invasion of France, which Edward was at that time busy concocting; and in his indignation he could hardly be restrained from ordering the complete destruction of Caen. He contented himself with sending the Earl of Northampton with the spoil-laden fleet to present the unspeakable document to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who might find in it a handy text for a political harangue wherewith to stir English patriotism with a view to future supplies. Whereupon the archbishop went in solemn procession to St Paul's Cross to damn King Philip and extol King Edward as a patriotic monarch, who, in making war on his adversary, was defending the sacred rights of his people.⁴¹ It did not occur to his Grace that there were documents lying in English archives which might be made to do similar patriotic duty at Paris and Edinburgh. But then at London, in this year of grace 1346, as has sometimes happened since, Providence has conferred a monopoly of rights on the English nation.

Bayeux, overawed by the fate of Caen, submitted on the following day, and Edward continued ⁴²

⁴¹ The treaty is given in Murimuth, pp. 205-208, and Avesbury, pp. 363-367. Michelet, without sufficient evidence, in my opinion, discards it as a forgery (*Histoire de France*, iv. 323-324).

• ⁴² Baker (p. 160) erroneously says that the English army remained six days at Caen.

his devastating march eastwards into the county of Evreux. The peasants fled at his approach, carrying terror with them as they went. Again there was little or no resistance by the flourishing cities on the route. "God," says Richard Wynkeley, Edward's confessor, and one of our war correspondents till Crecy, "had struck so great a terror into the hearts of all, that they seemed to have completely lost courage." There was no slackness in the work of pillage all the same, but as the fleet had sailed away loaded to the water's edge with the spoils of Caen, the invaders turned merchants on their own account, and while retaining the money and other easily portable valuables, allowed the miserable inhabitants to buy back their own goods at low prices for cash. Whereby John Bull's money-bags were swelled to huge proportions before he got to Louviers, "gathering finance in plenty by the way."⁴³ At Lisieux, two papal legates attempted in vain to negotiate a truce, offering on behalf of Philip the unquestioned possession of Aquitaine to Edward, with marriage alliances to boot, if he would sheathe the sword and make peace. This Edward, and still less his army (business being so flourishing in the brigand line), would not hear of, and the legates retired in impotence. At Louviers he turned northward to essay the capture of Rouen, where Philip had assembled a large force.⁴⁴ Among those who had responded to his summons were the King of Bohemia and his son, Charles, who, with the approval of the Pope and the French king, had taken the title of emperor, in defiance of Ludwig, the King of

⁴³ Froissart, iv. 423.

⁴⁴ Murimuth, p. 215; cf. *Chronicles of Valenciennes and Berne*.

Majorca, the Duke of Lorraine, the Counts of Flanders, Namur, Savoy, Geneva, and John of Hainault. Such an assemblage of princes, lords, and knights had not been heard of, according to Froissart, for the last hundred years. His own levies were, however, slow in responding, and instead of hastening to check the advance of his antagonist, he prudently awaited his approach on the north bank of the Seine at Rouen. So diffident was he of the fighting powers of his army, that he broke down the bridge which connected the city with the southern bank, and when Edward displayed his host in provocative fashion, and summoned him to come out and fight, he declined the challenge, and stuck to the walls. Edward was fain to content himself with the destruction of the suburbs, and retired towards Pont d'Arche, whence he continued his devastating march eastwards along the south bank of the Seine as far as Poissy, searching in vain for a bridge on which to cross. Philip, moving on the opposite bank as far as St Denis, broke down the bridges as he went, and left detachments to defend them in case Edward should attempt a passage. At Poissy Edward halted and determined to cross, come what might. Here, too, the bridge had been destroyed, but he set his carpenters to work to reconstruct it. They toiled at the work in spite of the missiles hurled at them from the balistas of the enemy on the opposite side. To dislodge this force, he sent over a detachment of archers on some rafts, who dispersed it with a loss of a thousand killed.

His marauding parties were meanwhile pursuing the work of devastation almost up to the walls of

Paris itself. St Germain, St Cloud, Bourg la Reine, Montjoie were sacked and burned, the smoke clouds on the western horizon being visible from the affrighted capital.⁴⁵ Consternation and confusion took possession of the excited Parisians. The murmurs of the Normans at the remissness of the monarch in marching to their defence were repeated in the streets of Paris. "Where is the king, where the army? Why do the king, the army not fight and save us? save the blazing towns yonder? Are not the terrible English at the gates! .To arms! break down the bridges, barricade the streets!" So the men, women, and children ran through the streets wringing their hands and crying for the king. King Philip, who had got to Paris by this time, and saw the smoke clouds on the horizon, was in great perturbation. Edward had his partisans in the capital, and if something were not attempted, sedition would of a certainty be the result of his remissness in allowing things to come to this pass. Philip therefore determined to sally forth to St Denis and challenge his antagonist to fight it out once for all. To this resolution the queen raised a violent opposition, and her efforts to restrain her impulsive husband ("for King Philip was a very hasty man"⁴⁶) drove him to distraction. The excited monarch scented treason in the advice of his counsellors, and burst out, accompanied by John of Hainault and half-a-dozen cavaliers, determined to risk his crown on a battle rather than lose it by a revolution. At his appearance, a crowd of men and women, which swelled as he went, ran after him. "Sire," cried

⁴⁵ Froissart, iv. 424.

⁴⁶ Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 16-17.

they, "where are you going? What shall we do? What will become of us? Remain, for the love of God, and help us." "Good people, I am going to St Denis, to my army, to fight for your safety and my own honour. Be afraid of nothing, but hold the town the best you can." Thus he rode on, leaving despair, and sedition, and anger behind him. Arrived at St Denis, where his allies had gathered, he despatched the Archbishop of Besançon to challenge Edward to battle on one of four given days, either between St Germain and Vaugirard, or between Francheville and Pontoise (14th August).

With the object of throwing his antagonist off the scent, Edward sent back a verbal message that he was about to advance south-eastwards towards Montfort, where Philip might come in quest of him if he chose. To make the bait more seductive, he ordered his advance parties to approach nearer the capital. His position had become hazardous in the extreme. The country far and near was seething with anger at the depredations of his army, and Paris showed no sign of espousing his cause. Philip's host was greatly superior in number, even if allowance be made for the exaggeration that it was as five to one. Defeat near Paris would be irremediable, while if he moved northwards, and got the Flemings to reinforce him, he might fight on advantageous terms. Anyhow, Calais and home lay northwards—Calais, the eager object of English longings, with home to escape to if the worst came. Instead, therefore, of taking the road to Montfort, he hastily crossed the Seine at Poissy, while Philip was moving eastwards on the wild goose errand of barring his expected passage above Paris. Once

safely across, he showed his hand by inditing a supercilious letter,⁴⁷ on the 17th August, from Grandvilliers, to Philip of Valois, in which he contemptuously refused the challenge on the conditions stipulated. Philip had been completely duped,⁴⁸ for by the time he received this stinging missive, Edward had got a handicap of two days in his retreat northwards, marching his hardest by Pontoise, Beauvais, Airaines, skirmishing successfully by the way with the levies gathering to join his antagonist, or with the troops sent in pursuit, while Philip himself followed hotly on his track.

On the 21st August Edward arrived at Airaines, a few miles from the Somme. Here he halted a day in order to reconnoitre. A deep river lay in front, and a passage must be found forthwith, for Philip was nearing Amiens, within an easy march to the eastward, and might sweep down on his prey before another day was over. This was what Philip hoped to do, and in order that Edward should not escape, he had caused the towns on its banks, from Amiens downwards past Abbeville to St Valery and Crotoy, where it broadens into an estuary, to be occupied by the levies on the march to join him. In this desperate situation Edward sent forward the Earl of Warwick and Godfrey de Harcourt with a strong force to find or force a passage. At Pont-a-Remy Warwick found the river strongly guarded, and was repulsed in a desperate attempt to dislodge

⁴⁷ The letters are given, in a Latin translation, by Hemingburgh (ii. 423-426), who wrongly dates Edward's letter the 15th August. Edward's letter in the original French exists in a MS. at Cambridge, given by Lettenhove, iv. 497.

⁴⁸ See Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 201.

its defenders. He fared no better at Long-en-Ponthieu and Pecquigny, and after sacking and burning Fontaine and Long-sur-Somme, where the bridges had been broken down, he was forced to return with the disconsolate tidings that between Abbeville and Amiens no passage was possible. Edward's anxiety was now intense, the spirits of his army at a very low ebb indeed. He paced up and down in reflective, melancholy mood.⁴⁹ To remain at Airaines was impossible, Philip being already on the march thither, sure of his prey. He must move at daybreak, and assay a passage somewhere between Abbeville and St Valery, come what might. To the army, however, he spoke in hopeful tones. "Gentlemen," cried he, "be not dismayed, for we have passed through many perils with the help of God, and I am persuaded that God, our Lady, and St George will find us a passage." At daybreak the army was in motion, bending north-westwards in the first place towards Oisemont, in order to increase the distance between it and its foe. Its departure was just in time, for by noon the advance guard of the French army, marching its hardest, had occupied Airaines, where it regaled itself with the supplies which the English had hastily abandoned. Here Philip was compelled to halt for a day, and await the arrival of the main body. Nevertheless, if the Somme would continue to flow only one day longer, Edward was undone, for somewhere between Airaines and Abbeville he must run him to earth. Thus calculated Philip in high hope, and this hope was shared by his captains. "Sire," said they, "you may now march at your

⁴⁹ Froissart, v. 4. Edward commença fort a muser et fort a merancolyer.

ease; the English are in a trap, and must surrender." The only passage where an attempt to ford the Somme could be made was at Blanche-Tague, between Abbeville and St Valery, and even if Edward should discover it, which was unlikely, Philip had taken care to place Godemiar du Fay with one thousand men-at-arms and five thousand footmen to hold the opposite bank.⁵⁰

Meanwhile Edward, hurrying onwards, found his way barred by the men of Oisemont. These he overwhelmed after a spirited struggle; but what availed this trifling success, with the Somme, deep and broad, a couple of leagues in front, and the French army hard on his heels? To-morrow must undo him, if he could not conjure a passage. Is there not some one, he asks, as he sits that evening in anxious meditation in the great hospital of Oisemont, who for the love of money will tell him where? Some French knight among his prisoners who will sell his country for a great reward? To their honour, there was not a cavalier but professed ignorance, and then Edward turned to the prisoners of lesser rank, offering liberty and one hundred English nobles to any one that would indicate some fordable spot. At last one man, Gobin Agache, a native of these parts, volunteered the welcome information. "Sire," said he, "I know a place where twelve men may pass abreast, with the water only up to their knees, when the tide is out. The bottom consists of white marle, so hard that a cart can pass over it. This passage is at Blanche-Tague."⁵¹ Edward, in great joy, put

⁵⁰ Murimuth, p. 216; Froissart, v. 8, who says he had 12,000 men; Northburgh in Avesbury, p. 368, who gives the number as 3,500.

⁵¹ Froissart, v. 10-11; cf. Northburgh in Avesbury, p. 368

twenty ecus into his hand, with promises of more if he spoke the truth. "My head on it, if I speak not truly," replied the man; "order your march so that you are at the river bank by sunrise." Edward gave orders accordingly, and retired to spend a few sleepless hours in repose. At midnight the sound of trumpet roused the army, and at the first streak of dawn, on the 24th August, the anxious march began, guide in front, baggage waggons following, towards Blanche-Tague. Here, too, Edward paced the river bank in consuming anxiety, waiting for his baggage waggons, watching the slowly ebbing tide, and counting the minutes that must soon bring the French on the scene. At any moment he might expect to hear that his rearguard was engaged. Time and tide were terribly slow that morning to the excited, impatient monarch; but at last the water ebbed, and the army prepared to cross. The Earl of Northampton and Reginald de Cobham went first in order to drive back Godemar du Fay's force on the opposite bank. It was a hazardous operation, but the knowledge that King Philip was at their heels nerved them for the attack. While the archers poured in a deadly discharge, the men-at-arms waded across, heedless of the counter discharge of the Genoese cross-bowmen, charged up the bank, put their assailants to flight, and chased the fugitives up to the gates of Abbeville.⁵² The main body followed just in the nick of time. The rearguard was still busy transporting the baggage

⁵² Murimuth, p. 216; Avesbury, p. 368; Froissart, v. 9-21. Northburgh says the English lost not a man during the passage. Froissart, however, asserts that there was a very determined resistance, and that the Genoese cross-bowmen did great execution.

when Philip's advance guard, under the King of Bohemia and John of Hainault, swept down on the stragglers, killing a number of them, and capturing some horses and baggage. Philip's prey had escaped him as by a miracle, and there was nothing for it but to strike eastwards for Abbeville, with the intention to cross the bridge there, and continue the pursuit.⁵³

Edward lingered near Blanche-Tague throughout the 24th to secure his rear from any immediate attempt at attack by way of the ford, and detached a force to the left to capture Crotoy, where it found a fleet of wine ships from La Rochelle, and a large quantity of provisions. On the morrow, Friday, the 25th, he continued his advance as far as Crecy, and here he determined to make a stand and offer battle to his adversary. "I am here on my rightful heritage of Ponthieu," said he, "and this place I will defend against my enemy, Philip of Valois."⁵⁴

Meanwhile Philip had got to Abbeville, and was busy concentrating his vast host. On Friday evening his scouts brought word that Edward had taken post at Crecy. This time, swore Philip, there should be no parley, as at Buironfosse, Tournay, and Malestroit, but combat to the bitter end. So it was resolved at a banquet to which he invited his captains and allies, and in the morning his "battles" took the road for Crecy. On they moved—five in number, 120,000 strong according to Froissart,⁵⁵

⁵³ Baker (p. 163) says that Philip sent to ask permission to cross and fight out their quarrel on the spot, and that Edward assented, but Philip thought better of it, and retired to Abbeville.

⁵⁴ Froissart, v. 25.

⁵⁵ Ibid., v. 37.

72,000 in the estimation of Wynkeley,⁵⁶ who, as an eye-witness, is the more credible authority—but in straggling, disordered fashion, each more eager than the other to be first, and becoming at length so disjointed that Philip sent an order to halt for the purpose of reforming his ranks. At this juncture the monk of Baseilles,⁵⁷ whom he had despatched to reconnoitre, brought back word that the English army was drawn up in three “battles” ready for the onset, and counselled a halt for the day. Philip approved the sage proposal, and sent two marshals to announce that the battle was postponed till the morrow. “Halt, halt,” shouted the marshals, “by command of the king and in the name of God and St Denis.” Unfortunately the order was disobeyed⁵⁸ by the undisciplined feudal horde, scrambling onward in its ardour to find the enemy. “Those in the front rank,” continues our chronicler, “halted on hearing the order, but those behind refused, and moved on, saying that they would not stop till they were as far forward as those in front. And when the first division saw those behind pressing onward, they too commenced to advance, saying, ‘We are first, and first we shall remain.’ Thus by silly pride the king’s will was frustrated. . . . The leaders, too, were jealous of each other, and eager to display their precedence and their prowess, . . . and thus the vast multitude surged forward until it

⁵⁶ Murimuth, p. 216.

⁵⁷ Chateau near Sedan. The lords of Baseilles were so called from the figure of a monk on their crest.

⁵⁸ Gilles le Muisis, on the other hand, asserts that Philip rejected the advice to halt and postpone the battle (*Corpus Chron. Flandriæ*, ii. 244).

approached the enemy, and the two armies stood in presence."⁵⁹

This insubordination and confusion presented a striking contrast to the perfect order of the motionless English ranks. The evening before, after feasting his generals, Edward had retired into his oratory to kneel in prayer for the divine aid. He was astir early on that fateful Saturday morning to hear Mass and make confession with his son and his lords. He then sallied forth to order his army in battle array. He had chosen his ground, with the insight of a master of tactics, on a slope dipping southwards into the Vallée des Clercs, with the village of Crecy on the right, the hamlet of Wadicourt on the left, and the wood of Crecy Grange in his rear. His right flank, which abutted on Crecy, he protected by a series of ditches rising upwards, one above the other; his left, which extended beyond Wadicourt, and was the more exposed, by palisades and baggage waggons, leaving open spaces for exit at intervals. On this advantageous position he ranged his army in three divisions, dismounting the men-at-arms and the mounted archers, and penning the horses in an enclosure of waggons in the wood behind. One division, under the Prince of Wales and the Earl of Warwick, was posted well down the slope, the archers on the wings, so as to gall the flanks of the approaching enemy,⁶⁰ men-at-arms in the centre. To break the expected charge, Edward had taken the precaution of having holes, a foot broad and deep, dug in front of the prince's division.⁶¹ The second division, commanded by the

⁵⁹ Froissart, v. 44-45.

⁶⁰ Baker, p. 166.

⁶¹ Baker (p. 166) is the only annalist who mentions these details.

Earls of Northampton and Arundel, was arrayed in like position farther up the slope; while the third, under Edward himself, was held in reserve on the crest in front of the wood of Crecy Grange. The prince's division was the strongest, consisting, according to Froissart, of 1,200 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 4,000 Welshmen, under their own banner, the red dragon of Merlin. Northampton's battle contained, according to the same author, but 1,200 men-at-arms and 3,000 archers; while Edward himself⁶² had in reserve 1,600 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and the remainder of the footmen. These numbers give an army of 20,000 men, without the footmen referred to, thus standing at bay on that historic hillside. Philip could, therefore, count on the advantage of greatly superior numbers to make up for the disadvantage of having to attack a select body of tried soldiers, drawn up by a skilful general on ground of his own choosing, and determined to maintain the defensive. The disposition of his army finished, Edward rode along his lines in gay confidence of success, exhorting them to do their duty, and vindicate his cause against the usurper. Each battle answered with a great shout, and then withdrew to refresh itself for the combat. Thereafter they reoccupied the position assigned them, sitting down on the ground, their basinets and their weapons beside them, and thus awaiting at ease the approach of the enemy.⁶³

Towards three o'clock the French army was descried advancing to the attack, Genoese cross-

⁶² Wynkeley says he was in the front ranks, but this is a mistake.

⁶³ Froissart, v. 31-36.

bowmen, seven thousand strong,⁶⁴ under Antonio Doria and Charles Grimaldi, towards the English right; the Duc d'Alençon, Philip's brother, with a superb body of heavy cavalry, in the centre; Philip himself on their extreme left; the rest of the vast host behind pressing on in the impetuous, disordered fashion, which was to be atoned so dearly before another three hours had run. "These men are ours," cried the English men-at-arms, as they beheld the unwieldy, struggling French host. At this moment a flash from the black clouds, that brooded ominously in the sultry atmosphere, heralded a furious thunderstorm. The lightning gleamed against the armour of the men-at-arms, and the angry sky rolled its thunders from host to host, as if in mockery of the warfare of puny mortals. A flock of ravens, wheeling over the French host, added to the weirdness of the scene. The wind blew its hardest; the rain came down in torrents, wetting the bow-strings of the Genoese, who, unlike the English, neglected the precaution to keep them in their cases. After a little the tempest passed, and the sinking sun shone forth from behind the English ranks full in the faces of their assailants. Without awaiting the arrival of the infantry, still at some distance in the rear, Philip ordered the Genoese cross-bowmen to advance to the attack. Wearied with the long march, and drenched with the rain, their bow-strings wet and almost useless, they obeyed with reluctance, and set up a great shout to disquiet their foe. The English stood to arms in dead silence, facing their

⁶⁴ Baker, p. 165. Villani has six thousand, which Froissart exaggerates to fifteen thousand.

enemy with undaunted countenance. A second and a third shout shook the air, and still there was no response, and no sign of fear, and then the cross-bowmen moved forward, plying their stiff bows. The English archers made one step in advance, and then a shower of arrows, swift and uninterrupted, fell on the half-hearted Genoese ranks, with fell effects. "Never before," says the chronicler, "had these Genoese met archers like those of England." English cannons, too, if the same authority may be trusted, began to boom their unearthly thunders, and in a few minutes the Genoese wavered, and fled backwards and sideways upon the mass of Alençon's men-at-arms. "Kill that cowardly rabble," shouted Alençon, beside himself with fury, "for they block our way, and undo us." In a moment the men-at-arms, interpreting their flight to mean treachery, were upon them, hewing, slaughtering without mercy, and the English beheld the strange spectacle of their enemies killing each other instead of attacking them.⁶⁵ Nor were they slack to improve their opportunity, for the archers continued their deadly discharge on the struggling mass in front. The confusion speedily became irreparable, the horses, maddened by the English arrows, rearing, plunging forwards or tearing backwards, trampling down the crowd of fugitive bowmen, and crushing their fallen riders. And ever

⁶⁵ The Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis (ii. 202) says that the French believed the Genoese to be traitors, and mistook their flight (caused by the impossibility of using their stiffened bows) for a prearranged movement, brought about by English gold! Luce gives in a note to his edition of Froissart (t. iv. 1) an important document in which this insinuation is referred to as a thing of public notoriety.

thicker came the shower of English arrows, falling "like snow-flakes," says our chronicler, on that vast heap of man and beast. And then the Welshmen sallying out (in spite of the order to remain within the ranks), belaboured the helpless mass with sword and dagger and axe, King Philip meanwhile looking on in impotent fury. At length the Count of Alençon, Count Louis of Flanders, the Duke of Lorraine, and Louis of Blois, succeeded in clearing this struggling mass, and charged the prince's division at the head of overwhelming numbers. In spite of stumbling steeds and hailstorm of arrows, they broke the first ranks of the archers and men-at-arms, and a desperate hand-to-hand combat ensued. The prince, surrounded by the *elite* of English chivalry, disputed the ground inch by inch, but his front ranks were broken, and it looked as if his division would be forced back. He was hurled to the ground and taken prisoner by Count Louis of Flanders, to be extricated the next moment by his standard bearer, Robert Fitzsimon, who laid about him with the utmost vigour, crying "Edward and St George! to the son of the king," until the Earls of Northampton and Arundel forced their way, with the second division, to the rescue. At this critical moment, Warwick sent John of Norwich with an urgent message for help to Edward, who surveyed the battle from the top of a windmill. "Sire," said the knight, "the prince is in great peril, and my lord of Warwick has sent me to beg you to hasten to his assistance." "Is my son dead, or wounded, that he cannot aid himself?" asked Edward. "No, sire, please God, but he is in a hard passage of arms, and has great need of your

help." "Return to him, and those who have sent you, and tell them from me that the prince must win his spurs, and come not to ask help so long as he can wield a sword, for please God and St George the day shall be his." With this response the knight galloped back to find the prince and his companions leaning grimly against the gruesome wall of the dead to draw breath, while awaiting a second onset.⁶⁶ On hearing these words, they fell to once more, as the enemy returned to the charge, with such irresistible energy, that the French horsemen were swept down the slope in irreparable rout in the dusk of the falling night. Generalship, discipline, and English tenacity had triumphed over frenzied valour, headlong ardour, reckless insubordination.

The onslaught by the French centre had been repulsed. Among the dead, who had right heroically wielded sword and spear during those redoubled but futile charges, were the leaders themselves—the luckless Counts of Alençon and Flanders, the Duke of Lorraine, and Louis of Blois, besides the *élite* of the French *noblesse* whom they had led to the charge. Among the dead, too, was the blind King of Bohemia. "How goes the battle?" asked the blind monarch of the monk of Baseilles, shortly after the commencement of the attack. "The Genoese are discomfited," was the reply, "and the French are killing them by order of King Philip." "A poor beginning for us, alas!" returned the king. "Where is Charles, my son?" "Sire, we know not," answered his knights; "he is fighting in front, we believe." "Gentlemen, you are my men, my friends

⁶⁶ Baker, p. 167, who says, however, that Edward sent twenty knights to his assistance.

and companions, I beg you to lead me forward that I may strike a blow this day." Yielding to his entreaties, they tied his bridle to theirs, and swept forward, to fall together in a heap in the thickest of the battle.

From his position on the right of his army, Philip beheld the horrible spectacle of carnage and rout, English arrows whizzing around him, wounding him in the face, and killing the charger of John of Hainault. He, too, was eager to charge, but to charge over that high layer of dead men and horses was as impossible as it would have been futile. Mad with rage, he set spurs to his horse, despite the remonstrances of John of Hainault, but after advancing a little way, he was persuaded to give it up and leave the field at nightfall, galloping away to the castle of La Broye. A loud knocking brought the chatelain to the walls to demand who was there. "Open, open, chatelain," cried Philip, "it is the unfortunate King of France." Resting till midnight, he again mounted his horse, and continued his tragic ride through the darkness to Amiens. The victors, however, refrained from pursuit, and spent the night on the field of battle, where living and dead slept in peace almost side by side, keeping large fires burning to light up the tragic gloom of that silent, solemn, misty night.

Edward saluted the prince at the head of his division in affectionate, flattering terms. "Dear son, God has endowed you with a good perseverance. You are my son indeed, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day." At which the prince bowed low, and the English host sent up a great shout, lauding God and the king and their cap-

tains for the triumph which crowned the efforts of the day.

Through the thick mist of the morrow, Sunday, the 27th, the victors espied a fresh army, consisting of the militia of Amiens and Abbeville, who, according to Froissart, were unaware of the defeat of the main body, and expected the battle to take place on that day, advancing to the attack. Without waiting for the shock, Warwick and Northampton swept down on these unsuspecting levies. After a short struggle, they were driven back, and pursued for three leagues, with a loss of several thousands, the victors meeting and dispersing a second force, under the Archbishop of Rouen and the Grand Prior of France, that was following in the wake of the first.

The battle of Crecy was even more fatal to the French *noblesse* than that of Courtrai had been forty years before. After the cessation of hostilities on Sunday, Edward sent Reginald de Cobham and other captains, with heralds and clerks, to count the dead and record the names of the French nobles who had fallen in the combats of the morning and the previous afternoon. Out of respect for their bravery and their rank, he accorded them the honour of interment with fitting military ceremony. Nearly every family of note in France had reason to lament the foolish ardour that had disconcerted Philip's generalship on that disastrous day. Among the dead were found, besides the King of Bohemia, the Duke of Lorraine, the Counts of Alençon, Flanders, and Blois, the Counts of Harcourt, Sancerre, Montbeliard, Vaudimont, Roncey, and many other distinguished warriors. "The *élite* of France lay on that fatal field," says Froissart. "Not for two hundred

years had so many princes and nobles fallen in battle, either at Courtrai, Bonivent, or elsewhere. God have their souls, for valiantly they died in the service of their king, who lamented them exceedingly when he knew the dire truth."⁶⁷

The total of the dead rises to appalling figures in some of the chroniclers. English eye-witnesses do not attempt to estimate the loss sustained by the rank and file, but the number of cavaliers given by Northburgh,—1,542 for the first battle, 400 for the second,⁶⁸—tells its own tragic tale. Froissart, as usual, attempts the impossible task of giving exact figures, viz., 11 princes, 84 knights bannerets, 1,200 knights (*d'un escut ou de II.*), and 16,000 others—esquires, Genoese, communal militia, &c., and more than double the latter number in another passage! Villani is still more sanguinary with 20,000, of whom 1,600 were lords and knights bannerets, and 4,000 esquires. Finally, Knighton⁶⁹ and the chronicler of Valenciennes do not hesitate to kill off fully the half of Philip's host, with 34,000 and 41,000 respectively! These figures are of course fanciful, but the fact that no quarter was given, and that the wild Welsh mountaineers struck down the French cavaliers and others who fell in their way without mercy, for the sake of plunder, explains, if it does not render altogether credible, the terrible death roll on the side of the French.

On the other hand, the victors escaped almost

⁶⁷ The King of Majorca was not killed at Crecy, as Wynkeley and Walsingham assert.

⁶⁸ Avesbury, p. 369.

⁶⁹ Baker (p. 168) has 4,000 of higher rank killed, besides innumerable footmen,

scatheless. Two knights and an esquire, a few archers, with some Welshmen, who rashly exposed themselves, was the puny price, if we may trust Froissart and the English eye-witnesses of the battle, paid in blood for one of the most notable of English victories.⁷⁰ While these figures are very probably far too meagre, the fact that Edward fought a defensive battle in a favourable position against an undisciplined enemy, makes it credible that his loss was comparatively trifling.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Baker says only forty were killed (p. 169).

⁷¹ For the march from Poissy and the battle of Crecy, see Froissart (Lettenhove), v. 46-70, and Luce's edition, iii. 33-63; Jean le Bel, ii. 61-93; Cont. de G. de Nangis, ii. 201-203; Villani, *Storia Fiorentina*, *Classici Italiani*, cliii. 161-179; Murimuth, pp. 216, 246-248; Avesbury, pp. 368-369; Baker, pp. 163-169; Knighton, i. 36-38; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 77-82; Gilles li Muisis (*Corpus Chron. Fland.*, ii. 241-246). Among modern French works on the battle see *Dissertation sur la Bataille de Crecy*, par F. C. Louandre, in *La Revue Anglo-Française*, t. iii.; *Memoire sur le plan et la position des deux armées a la bataille de Crecy*, par le Baron Seymour de Constant; *Notice historique sur Crecy*, par M. de Cayrol (*Memoires de la Société d'Emulation d'Abbeville*, 1836-1837); *Itineraire au Champ de bataille de Crecy* lu à la Société des Sciences Morales le 2 Dec. 1836, par l'Abbé Caron; *Etudes historiques sur Edward III., Philippe de Valois et la guerre de 1346*, par de Pongerville.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS AND THE SIEGE OF CALAIS (1346-1347).

ON Monday, the 28th, Edward resumed his march northwards, burning and pillaging as he went, by way of Montreuil, Etaples, Boulogne, and Wissant, to Calais. His aim was the reduction of Calais, which he invested on the 4th September. It was held by a strong garrison under John de Vienne, and so effectively protected by its double walls and ditches,¹ and by the marshes of Artois, that he refrained from an assault, and determined to starve it into surrender. Moreover, the swampy ground was ill suited for the erection of siege engines, and the besieged had taken the precaution of hanging sacks filled with chaff over the walls to deaden the impact of missiles.² As the process of starvation must be a long one, he established his army for the winter in cantonments around the city, while a large fleet kept up the blockade seawards.³ A wooden town sprang up, Edward himself being lodged in a large erection elaborately fitted up for a long sojourn. In this new town, as it was called (*ville neuve la Hardie*), a market was held twice a week, and thither came the merchants of Flanders and England to do a roaring trade in supplying the needs of the army, while the

¹ Baker, p. 174.

² Ibid., p. 175.

³ Ibid., p. 174 ; Knighton, ii. 39.

country as far as St Omer and Boulogne was scoured by foraging parties, and every movable and eatable thing carried off to the camp. As the garrison could not go on defying hunger indefinitely, in the presence of a large fleet and army, Calais was evidently doomed. Edward harboured a bitter animosity against its inhabitants, who had long inflicted much damage on English shipping.⁴ Moreover, its capture would give him an incalculable advantage against his adversary. With an English garrison in Calais, as well as in Bordeaux, he hoped to become master of the situation. Hence the tenacity with which he held to his resolution. He could now afford to wait, the victory of Crecy having lamed the offensive power of Philip. Philip had, in truth, no heart for a new campaign, though he had a fresh army at his disposal in the forces with which the Duke of Normandy had hastened northwards from Aiguillon. He disbanded both armies, and contented himself with strengthening the garrisons of Boulogne, St Omer, and other neighbouring towns, in order to harass the English foraging parties, and with sending out squadrons to intercept English merchantmen bringing supplies to Calais.

The prospect of relief being small, John de Vienne determined to husband his resources. He divested himself of the poorer part of the population by driving them forth the town into the space between the walls and the English lines. The wretched crowd of men, women, and children excited the compassion of the English king, and instead of allowing them to starve to death, he gave them a

⁴ Villam Calesiam, ab olim sibi regnoque suo toti infestissimam (Walsingham, i. 269).

meal and some money, and allowed them to pass the lines in quest of maintenance elsewhere.⁵

Having established himself comfortably before Calais, Edward ventured an appeal to Parliament for a fresh grant, on the strength of the great triumph of English arms. Parliament accordingly met on the 11th September, to hear the report of a commission, headed by Bartholomew Burghersh, whom Edward sent over to give an official account of his successes and his plans for the future. It listened with patriotic satisfaction to the story of the progress of the English army from La Hogue to Calais. Its patriotism was further stirred by the reading of the Convention between Philip and the Norman barons in 1338. It granted a new supply to the amount of two-fifteenths for two years, but with its wonted public spirit it enlarged on the terrible drain of these oft-repeated demands, and denounced the intolerable practice of levying troops at the expense of the community without consent of Parliament, the exactions of the purveyors, the forty shilling duty on wool, and the continued appropriation of English benefices by foreign clerics, ignorant varlets most of them,—tailors, shoemakers, chamberlains, and other menials of the cardinals. In response, Burghersh palliated the persistent and unconstitutional conscription complained of, by the plea of stress of circumstances, and refused to assent to the abolition of the obnoxious forty shilling tax.

⁵ Froissart, v. 83-88. Knighton says that he left them to perish miserably between his camp and the walls, and places the episode in the following summer. It is possible to reconcile the episodes by supposing that Knighton refers to a second and later exodus.

In regard to the other abuses, he promised redress or modification, and in response to a representation by the Earls of Warwick and Northampton that the king had conferred the honour of knighthood on the Prince of Wales at La Hogue, Parliament courteously added a grant of forty shillings for every knight's fee, in recognition of the event.⁶

On the strength of this grant, to which the clergy added a tenth for two years,⁷ Edward ordered reinforcements to be sent to Calais (Philip, according to rumour, being busy levying a fresh army at Compiègne), and directed the Earl of Gloucester to assemble a fleet to protect the English transports carrying supplies from the attacks of French corsairs.⁸ It was not, however, in northern France but in northern England that the greatest danger lay, and we must now leave Edward skirmishing around Calais, and take a brief survey of events on the Scottish border, where a secondary, but by no means unimportant act in the great war drama was in progress. There had been raids and reprisals by the freebooting barons on both sides of the border in spite of the truce of Malestroit. In August 1343 the Scots are found besieging Lochmaben Castle, still held by an English garrison, and the men of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancaster were ordered to proceed to its defence.⁹ On the eastern side of the border invasion was apparently threatened at the same time, for the men of Durham and

⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 157-163; *Fœdera*, iii. 90.

⁷ Knighton, ii. 45.

⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 91.

⁹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, i. 640, 641 (15th August and 20th September). From the Rot. Scot., i. 658, 661, it is evident that the English were in possession of Annandale and the Vale of Moffat at this time, which were held by Lord Northampton's men.

Northumberland received similar orders to march northward.¹⁰ While thus taking steps to repel the Scottish marauders, Edward from time to time commissioned several of the northern magnates to treat for the observance of the truce.¹¹ By the month of August 1344, it looked as if these mutual raids were to end in an official rupture and a Scottish invasion. At all events on the 18th of that month, Edward appointed Baliol captain of the levies, to be raised north of the Trent against the Scots.¹²

Edward was an adept at assuming the tone of the injured party to the utter oblivion of his own delinquencies. Not only did he continue to call Baliol King of Scotland in these official directions (a mere matter of etiquette perhaps), and harbour the claimant to the Scottish throne as his pensioner (an obligation of honour perhaps); he had been intriguing with some of the Scottish nobles, notably with William Douglas, in order, it would seem, to foment a conspiracy against King David.¹³ Douglas was proving a fickle subject and a treacherous friend, though he was undoubtedly a born soldier, and had done King David and Scotland good service. The treachery with which he did Alexander Ramsay to death, his companion in many a patriotic feat of arms, is a foul stain on his memory, as well as a significant commentary on the wild manners of the time. Ramsay, who was

¹⁰ Rotuli Scotiæ, i. 640.

¹¹ Foedera, ii. 1230 (August 1343) and 1239 (December); Rot. Scot., i. 644-645 (November-December 1343) and 648-651 (May-July 1344).

¹² Ibid., iii. 21 (25th August 1344); cf. Rot. Scot., i. 652, *et seq.*

¹³ See Rot. Scot., i. 637 (10th April 1343) and 640 (18th August); cf. Foedera, ii. 1230.

warden of Roxburgh Castle, which, as we have seen, he had wrested from the English in March 1342, and Sheriff of Teviotdale, had repaired to Hawick, on the 20th June of that year, to dispense justice. While he sat in the church, word was brought that William Douglas was approaching. Ramsay had been warned to be on his guard against the choleric knight of Liddesdale, who resented his appointment to the sheriffship in preference to himself, but as they had amicably settled their differences, he was under no apprehension of harm, and courteously rose and greeted Douglas as he entered the sacred building. He asked him to be seated beside him, when Douglas and his followers set upon and wounded him and some of his men who rushed forward to protect him. They wound up their sacrilegious and treacherous violence by carrying off the wounded knight in chains to Douglas' Castle of Hermitage, near Castletown, and starving him to death in one of the dungeons, the tragic process lasting seventeen days.¹⁴ It was a dark deed, and unfortunately it is only one of many sinister episodes in Scottish domestic history, which from this time, as the chronicler laments, begins to be steeped in family and faction feud. These Scottish forefathers of ours were in truth a turbulent, fire-eating race of men, who must needs fight, if only against each other, and the pressure of the English aggressor being removed, the lords and their retainers found in civil strife a welcome change from the monotony of peace, and filled the land with slaughter and anarchy.¹⁵

¹⁴ Fordun, i. 365-366; Wyntoun, ii. 468-470.

¹⁵ Ibid., i. 366.

We need not wonder, then, to find rough and quarrelsome men like Douglas in treasonable communication with Edward, especially as the murder of Ramsay exposed him to the resentment of David. The English king was quick to see his advantage in the lawless insubordination that made David's tenure of the Scottish throne insecure, and might be played off against the Franco-Scottish alliance. Among those who had helped to win Scotland for David, some, like William Bullock, the chamberlain, had formerly been adherents of Baliol, and their allegiance might not be proof against English bribes. South of the border, too, there were partisans of the worsted claimant who had sought refuge and pensions at the Court of Edward, and might be used to fan the disaffection of the malcontents in Scotland. Certain it is that Bullock was about this time suspected of treasonable dealings with Edward and the exiled Scots, and was stripped of his offices and his wealth, and confined in a Highland keep.¹⁶ It is probable enough that "the league" which Edward was so anxious to contract with Douglas was connected with these intrigues directed from England against David, who in his turn was busy fomenting sedition among the turbulent Irish chiefs.¹⁷ Edward's underhand diplomacy proved a failure, however. Douglas did not carry his intrigues the length of turning traitor, and through the mediation of the Steward made his peace with David, and obtained the wardenship of Roxburgh and the sheriffship of Teviotdale.¹⁸ Edward's anxieties for the defence of the border became more worrying in consequence, and throughout the winter

¹⁶ At Malimora (Fordun, i. 364-365).

¹⁷ Knighton, ii. 45.

¹⁸ Wyntoun, ii. 469-470.

and summer of 1345 letter followed letter to the northern barons to hold their forces in readiness to repel a Scottish invasion,¹⁹ which in August of that year was daily expected.²⁰ In the end of October the dreaded inroad took place,²¹ Douglas bursting into Cumberland and Westmoreland at the head of thirty thousand men, if Walsingham's figures may be trusted. In spite of Edward's repeated mandments they found the country undefended, and burned Carlisle, Penrith, and many other places before the Bishop of Carlisle and Thomas de Lucy could gather a small force to oppose them. With this handful they crept round the Scottish encampment by night, and indulged in much trumpet-blowing and shouting in order to frighten them into retreat. This performance they repeated night after night, and the Scots, believing themselves surrounded by a large army, did not venture to move for foraging purposes till hunger drove Alexander Strachan to make an attempt to replenish the starving camp. A spirited fight ensued, during which the Scottish captain was slain by Robert Oggil, whilst the Bishop of Carlisle, who was unhorsed and taken prisoner, was rescued by the prowess of his followers. The Scots were ultimately worsted with heavy loss, according to the English scribe, and were fain to decamp homewards before the approach²² of Lords Percy and Neville with the men of Northumberland, and Lord Lucy with those of Lancaster.²³ At the news of the incursion Edward himself hurried north to ensure the safety of the border during his contemplated expe-

¹⁹ See Rot. Scot., i. 659, *et seq.*

²⁰ Ibid., i. 664.

²¹ See *Fœdera*, iii. 62.

²² Walsingham, i. 267.

²³ Ibid., i. 266-267; cf. Chron. de Lanercost.

dition to Guienne. He spent six weeks on this mission, before returning to London on the 17th December.²⁴

In view of Edward's preparations for the invasion of France, Philip turned to his Scottish allies for help. Shortly before Edward landed at La Hogue, he wrote a letter to his dearest cousin of Scotland, urging him to make a diversion in his favour by an irruption into England. He himself had a fleet in readiness to carry the war across the Channel, and punish the presumptuous ambition of the English king. Let David be ready to pay off old scores, and co-operate, as the faithful ally of France, in the glorious undertaking!²⁵ A month later came a still more urgent epistle, in which Philip is forced to confess that his plan of an invasion has been forestalled by his enterprising enemy. Edward is already in Normandy, and now or never is David's chance! Every available English soldier is in France and Flanders, and Philip marvels greatly that his dearest cousin is not already across the border and working his will on defenceless England. Let David only send word to this effect, and his fleet shall carry across a mighty host to complete the destruction of their common foe, should Edward hurry back at the news.²⁶

So urged King Philip, and in an evil hour King David chivalrously listened. Young, impetuous, vigorous, the son of Robert Bruce yearned for revenge and renown.²⁷ He had imbibed the spirit of

²⁴ Murimuth, pp. 189-190.

²⁵ The letter is written from the hospital of Mesy, on the 20th June 1346. Hemingburgh gives a Latin translation (ii. 421-422).

²⁶ This letter is written from St Denis on the 22nd July (Hemingburgh, ii. 422-423).

²⁷ Wyntoun, ii. 470.

chivalry in French camps, but he had not learned in this superficial school the calculation and insight that make the general. The son was to prove himself as headstrong, rash, indiscriminating in the field as the father had shown himself cool, calculating, and prompt. The deliverance of Scotland had been accomplished for him by men of similar spirit, but at the critical moment, when the fate of a battle depended on his yielding to the sage advice of one of the bravest of his captains, the self-confidence of the young monarch was superior to experience. It was unfortunate for Scotland that he did not leave the chief command on this occasion in abler hands. Better still had he stayed at home. There was generosity indeed in the prompt response to Philip's entreaty, and the conduct of David in forthwith summoning his host to Perth to strike a blow for the staunch friend of adverse days, contrasted with the mercenary spirit of Edward's allies. Nor was there slackness on the part of the barons and their retainers in obeying this summons. There were bitter resentments enough to render such an expedition popular from the Tweed to the Moray Firth, which had not yet recovered from the excesses of the English ravager. If the Scots hated the English with a deadly hatred, and sympathised warmly with France, Edward and his predecessors were mainly to blame for the eagerness with which they drew the sword for King Philip. From the Western Isles even contingents came to swell the Scottish army. Ranald of the Isles, the Earl of Ross, and many another Highland chieftain were there, with "their savage war-bands."²⁸ There, too, the Earls of Moray, Fife, Strathearn, Menteith,

²⁸ Froissart, v. 120.

March, Wigton, William Douglas, William Mowbray, John Sinclair, Alexander Ramsay, and many other barons, with their retainers, of the eastern and southern counties, besides the militia of the towns. Plunder doubtless whetted patriotism, for to help King Philip was to fill their own keeps and barns with English spoil, much envied in those meagre times, when Scotland had been harried for half a century to satisfy the ambition of English kings and their pensioners. War in these circumstances, like most of the wars of the time, was a commercial speculation as much as a political enterprise. It simply meant the ruin of a country for the benefit of the invader, as in Normandy, Brittany, Guienne, and elsewhere. Edward could hardly complain if these "canny" Scots gave Englishmen at home a taste of the practical application of the art of war, as exercised by themselves at the expense of Scotland and France.

Before David's army got in motion, a tragic incident occurred, which throws its sinister light on the wild character of those feudal days. The Earl of Ross bore Ranald of the Isles deadly enmity for some reason or other which our chronicler does not explain, laid an ambush for him at the nunnery of Elcho, slew him and some of his followers, and made off back to Ross-shire with his men. The base deed seemed of evil omen, Ranald being "a wycht man and worthy," and the army suffered by desertion in consequence, many of the Highland chiefs going back to their mountains to take part in the feud, others to escape the disaster which they foreboded. David nevertheless held on his way, marching southwards by Stirling, and halting to

settle old scores with Walter Selby, who held the keep of Liddel for King Edward.²⁹ It endured a six days' bombardment with huge engines before the besiegers burst in through the battered walls, and put every man, including the commander, to the sword, sparing only the women and children.³⁰ Here Douglas counselled retreat, saying that they ought to be satisfied with the capture of the castle. He might well talk of going back, objected the other leaders, since he had filled his own bags, but theirs were empty; and with England lying defenceless before them, they might march to London if they chose. "There's not a man to hinder us," said they, with over-confident rashness, "for all the warriors of England are gone to France, leaving but a pack of shoemakers, skinnners, and merchants behind."³¹ In this supercilious mood they continued their march, about the beginning of October, 62,000 strong,—according to the Rev. Thomas Samson, a well-informed contemporary scribe of the diocese of York,—of whom 2,000 were knights and men-at-arms, 20,000 other well-armed troops, and 40,000 common soldiers, armed with spears, axes, and bows, sure of spoil and victory even if these shoemakers and merchants should dare to

²⁹ Froissart, Baker, Knighton, take David across the border by way of Roxburgh and Berwick. On the other hand, Thomas Samson says that the Scots entered England by the western march "in the parts towards Carlisle," captured the peel of Liddel, and continued their march by way of Westmoreland, Tyndale, Thesedale, and Extildesham into the diocese of Durham. Wyntoun and the Chronicon de Ianercoast also take them by the western route. The letter of Samson proves decisively that Froissart and his fellow-chroniclers are wrong.

³⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 473; Avesbury, p. 376.

³¹ Ibid., ii. 473.

show face. They moved on across the Cumberland hills into the valley of the Upper Tyne as far as Hexham, burning and rieving by the way.³² In Hexham Abbey the ghost of St Cuthbert emphasised the warning words of William Douglas, presumably in the troubled sleep of King David, dreaming uneasily of the pillage of the saint's lands. The ghost chid in vain, and the sacrilegious monarch and his host continued their march to Durham, and some miles beyond to Neville's Cross. Here in the park of Beaurepair (Bearpark) they pitched their camp, astonishing the natives by the splendour of their tents and pavilions, with plenty to eat in their meal-sacks, and more for the taking, and consequently in the very best of spirits. Not a man to stop their progress to London, or to prevent them carrying all the wealth of England homewards! No need, therefore, of haste or circumspection, and for several days they gave themselves up to this hilarious confidence, and sent never a scout southwards to reconnoître.

Meanwhile William de la Zouche, Archbishop of York, Lords Neville, Percy, Mowbray, Scrope, Musgrave, Rokeby, Lucy, Ferrers, the Earl of Angus, and other magnates of these northern parts, had heard of their approach,³³ had gathered their hasty levies at Richmond, and were marching in hottest haste by Castle Barnard and Bishop Auck-

³² Ardant, destruant, preiant, derobeant, et fesant tut le mal et tut le hount qu'ils poaient tant qu'environ la cité de Duresme, says Samson.

³³ From the Rot. Scotiæ (i. 674) it appears that the English Government had information of the intended invasion about the middle of September, and had warned the northern magnates to be in readiness to repel it.

land towards Durham. But a few miles in front of the Scots, on the morning of the 17th October, they had arrayed this army in three divisions, 32,000 strong, according to Samson,—consisting of 1,000 men-at-arms, 1,000 to 2,000 hobelars or light cavalry, 10,000 archers, and 20,000 other troops—, ready to fall on the unsuspecting invaders. Neville and Percy were in command of the first; the archbishop and Angus led the second; while the third was under the command of Lord John Mowbray. On that morning William Douglas, who set out to sack the village of Merington, suddenly stumbled on what must have seemed the phantom of an army. The phantom turned his back to the Scottish camp, leaving a trail of dead behind, and bearing the astonishing news that an English army was at their heels. David hastily drew up his forces in three battles, taking the command of the centre himself, giving the right to the Earl of Moray and William Douglas, the left to Robert the Steward. The ground on which they took their hasty stand, being intersected with hedges, was ill-suited for concerted action, and gave the English an advantage if they chose to direct their attack on any given point. One division might easily be overwhelmed by the archers and the charge of the men-at-arms before the others could strike in with effect to its assistance. In these unpropitious circumstances, the English vanguard—a large banner, on which was blazoned the cross, conspicuous among many other pennons fluttering in

³⁴ Anglici inopinante supervenerunt super eum (Douglas),—Knighton, ii. 42.

the breeze—came up and began to pour in a deadly discharge on the ill-formed and hampered Scottish army. "Give me but a hundred horsemen," cried Sir John Graham, "and I'll scatter these archers, and then we may fight with greater safety." Sir John had the quick eye of the great general, but David was too opinionated to see with other men's eyes, and stubbornly threw away his only chance of victory, leaving Sir John to charge almost singly the mass of archers whose discharge was already telling with deadly effect on the Earl of Moray's division. In a short time it was driven back in confusion, and attempted in vain to reach to the help of that of the king, wedged among the hedges, and exposed in its turn to a shower of English arrows. They next attempted to strengthen the division of the Steward, which was also exposed to a hailstorm of arrows; but the array once broken, it was impossible to re-form it on such ground in solid enduring fashion. The advantage of numbers was thus lost, yet so stubbornly fought the Scots, "who know not how to flee," interjects an English contemporary chronicler,³⁵ that the archers and other footmen were twice driven back.³⁶ This was the critical moment of the day, for had the Scottish divisions had room to throw their weight on the English men-at-arms, the day was clearly theirs. As at Crecy, however, the want of cohesion and concentration in the Scottish ranks saved the situation for the English, and the tenacity of the English men-at-arms,

³⁵ Baker, p. 172, *Resistat animose natio Scotica, nescia fugæ.*

³⁶ The testimony of Samson is very explicit on this point. *Deux fois se retraierent les archers et comunes de nostre part; mais nos gentz d'armes se combatièrent et se continuèrent durement bien tant que les archers et communes reassemblèrent.*

and the prowess of the Bishop of Durham, who hurried to the rescue,³⁷ gave the archers time to re-form and renew the battle, each time with greater advantage, until the Steward's division was broken and dispersed, carrying the greater part of that of Moray along with it in the rush of flight. The king was thus left to maintain the desperate struggle against the full strength of the enemy, who now pressed not merely in front, but on both flanks, finally surrounding and forcing him to surrender. Like grim death did he and his men stand their ground to the last handful. "Loyally persisting by the side of their king," says Baker, "they preferred glorious death to base life. Like a tower they stood clustered together, protecting their sovereign, till scarcely forty were left, of whom not one could escape."³⁸ Not till he was wounded in two places did David yield himself a prisoner to John of Copeland, his captor losing two teeth in the struggle by a blow from the king's dagger. Among the other prisoners were the Earls of Fife, Menteith, Sutherland, and Wigton, William, Henry, and John Douglas, William Mowbray, Walter and Alexander Haliburton, Patrick Polwarth, Adam Fullerton, John Steward, John Sinclair, Roger Kirkpatrick, David Fitzwalter, William Ramsay, and many other barons. The Earls of Moray and Strathearn, John Haliburton, Henry Ramsay, Thomas Boyd, David Hay, Edward Keith, John Crawford, John Lindsay, Philip Meldrum, Alexander More, Humphrey Kirkpatrick,

³⁷ Froissart confirms Samson's statement that the English were on the point of being defeated when the Bishop of Durham timeously intervened (v. 137).

³⁸ p. 174.

Paton Hering, Maurice Murray, were among the dead, who included many other names renowned in Scottish chivalry, and amounted to 540 knights and men-at-arms, and over 12,000 common soldiers.³⁹ The losses on the English side were likewise severe, for in spite of superior tactics and the fell English archery, the Scots disputed every advantage for several hours⁴⁰ with a bravery that merited a better leader than the heroic but opinionated youth who commanded them, and a fairer field to display it on. "There was many a great feat of arms, and many a fine rally," says Froissart, "for the Scots wielded their axes with terrible fury, and gave many a lusty blow on that day."⁴¹ "The fierce Scots," adds Baker, "with steel-covered heads, inclined forwards, their polished helmets and shields close together, defied the arrows of the archers, and broke their ranks, but the first battle of the men-at-arms saluted them with sturdy blows of lance and sword. There they stood in fierce conflict, both sides more ready for death than flight. You might have seen the Scots, exhausted by the grim work, stunned by the blows of the axes on their heads, nevertheless standing firmly together, so that where perhaps there stood ten, wedged one against the other, and one sank to the ground, the whole ten fell in a heap, *as those who saw them falling afterwards told the writer.*"⁴²

While Lord Lucy, who arrived too late to take part in the battle, took up the pursuit and swelled the sickening roll of the dead,⁴³ David was carried

³⁹ Samson.

⁴⁰ "Del hour de none tanq a l'hour de vespre," says Samson.

⁴¹ v. 127.

⁴² p. 172.

⁴³ Samson. The fugitives were also exposed to attack by the garrison of Berwick.

by his captor to the castle of Ogle, according to Froissart, to Bamborough, according to Knighton, and carefully guarded by Lord Percy till his wounds were healed. He and other notable prisoners⁴⁴ were afterwards brought to London, and confined in the Tower. "It is to thee, Philip, that I owe my presence here," murmured the forlorn David, who had arranged to salute the King of France in the English capital! His arrival was made the occasion of a public celebration in honour of the victory. Conspicuously mounted on a black charger, the captive monarch rode at the head of a guard of two thousand men-at-arms. The procession was further swelled by the city guilds in gala costume, and passed through the streets to the Tower amid a vast concourse of the citizens.⁴⁵ Here he was to languish for twelve years, Edward ungenerously compelling him and the other prisoners to pay the cost of their maintenance.⁴⁶ The heavy drain of the war on the Treasury might be adduced by the taxpayer in palliation of this petty parsimony. There could be no excuse for the act of outrageous cruelty towards the Earl of Menteith, who was tried on a charge of treason against Edward in his capacity of Lord Superior of Scotland, dragged at the tails of horses through the streets of London, hanged, decapitated, disembowelled, and quartered, his head being finally affixed to a pole on the bridge of London, and his quartered remains exposed at York, Carlisle, Newcastle, and Berwick.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The official list in the Rot. Scot., i. 678, contains the names of 150 persons of note. It is apparently not exhaustive.

⁴⁵ Knighton, ii. 46.

⁴⁶ Rot., i. 696, 705.

⁴⁷ Murimuth, p. 253; cf. Rot. Scot., i. 687-689; *Fœdera*, iii. 108. The Earl of Fife was also sentenced to death as a traitor,

Scotland was stunned by this terrible disaster, and had to pay the penalty of defeat in the form of an English raid. The invaders replenished their empty barns and stables with cattle and other spoil, which they carried off without stint or restraint.⁴⁸ This was only fair retaliation, but Edward was bent on improving the opportunity for obtaining a more solid advantage than the recovery of English gear. Nothing less than the conquest of Scotland would satisfy him. To this end he summoned the northern magnates to Westminster to devise with the regent and his ministers measures for carrying out its subjugation.⁴⁹ Edward was a man of many projects, and happily for Scotland and France, he always reckoned beyond his powers. It was not within the range even of his enterprising

but reprieved on account of his relationship to the king. For the invasion of the Scots and the battle of Neville's Cross, see the letter of Samson, in the Bodleian Library, which is reproduced by Lettenhove in the notes to Froissart (v. 489-492), and has not been hitherto used in the accounts of the battle given by historians; Wyntoun, ii. 472-474; Fordun, i. 367; Murimuth, pp. 218-219; Avesbury, pp. 376-377; Knighton, ii. 41-45; Baker, pp. 169-174; Chron. de Lanercost, pp. 344-352; Scalachronica, p. 301. Froissart's account (v. 118-145) is more romance than history, and is evidently written in glorification of Queen Philippa, to whom he ascribes the honour of the victory. *He ought to have known better, for he was a visitor at the English Court, and learned besides a great deal about the battle while on a visit to Scotland in 1365, as he himself tells us (v. 133). Queen Philippa, who had gone to Calais to join her husband about the 10th of September (Fœdera, iii. 90), was at Ypres on the day on which the battle was fought, on a visit to her sister, the Empress Margaret of Germany, as is proved by a charter in the archives at Mons!

⁴⁸ Knighton, ii. 44; cf. Fordun, i. 367. It is probable that Lothian was not "consumed" till the following year.

⁴⁹ Rot. Scot., i. 679.

mind to realise his manifold ambition, and the siege of Calais saved Scotland in the sad plight in which the attempt to deliver Philip from his embarrassments had landed it, from a repetition of English domination. The Scots, far from acknowledging English supremacy in the person of Edward Baliol, who again emerges from his sorry obscurity, entrusted the government to Robert the Steward, as guardian for the second time on behalf of David, and took measures to maintain the independence of the nation and its allegiance to the House of Bruce.⁵⁰

Edward first tried to seduce the Scottish barons by the wiles of diplomacy.⁵¹ John of the Isles, in particular, was tempted to transfer his allegiance (if indeed he owned any) to the English monarch, and threatened with punishment should he continue contumacious to his rightful sovereign!⁵² The arts of seduction failing, Edward had recourse to force, putting forward Edward Baliol once more as "tulchan" king. In the summer of 1347, two English armies crossed the border—one, twenty thousand strong, under Lord Percy, by way of Berwick; the other, exaggerated by the chronicler⁵³ to the ridiculous total of three hundred thousand men, by Carlisle.

After the crushing blow of Neville's Cross, there was no attempt to dispute their progress in the field. The Scots seemed to have betaken themselves, as usual, to the hills and forests, sallying out on opportunity to harass their foes. Roxburgh Castle was already in English hands,⁵⁴ and there was no strong-

⁵⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 478; Fordun, i. 368.

⁵¹ See Rot. Scot., i. 676, 684.

⁵² Ibid., i. 677.

⁵³ Knighton, ii. 47; cf. Rot. Scot., i. 691-692 and 694, 700-702.

⁵⁴ Rot. Scot., i. 685.

hold south of the Lammermoors capable of offering resistance to Percy's formidable force. Tweeddale, the Merse, Teviotdale, Ettrick were speedily overrun⁵⁵ and well harried, we may be sure, if anything was left to harry after the English raid of the preceding autumn. Breasting the Lammermoors, Percy then swept down on the Lothians, where a richer booty awaited him. Edinburgh, which was held by William of Moray, he did not venture to attack, but he ravaged the fertile district around it, and met with so little resistance that he boasted that he had advanced the boundary of England from the Tweed to the Pentlands.⁵⁶ Meanwhile Baliol had been equally successful in the south-west. After raiding Annandale and Galloway, he pushed northwards and effected a junction with Percy in Lothian.⁵⁷ Turning westwards, the united armies marched by Falkirk to Glasgow, and on into Ayrshire and Dumfries, harrying the rich vales of Cunningham and Nithsdale, and capturing the town of Ayr by the way. In the western counties, where John Kennedy and Alain Steward kept up a harassing warfare against the English forces in Galloway, there was more resistance, and the march cost the invaders considerable loss in more than one tough encounter. When they reached the Solway, they had little to show, as our patriotic rhymers exultingly sing, for all this parade of King Edward's power, and only in the imagination of the English annalist had Scotland succumbed and recognised pensioner Baliol as its rightful sovereign. If, as Knighton asserts, the Scots supplicated and obtained

⁵⁵ Wyntoun, ii. 477.

⁵⁶ Ibid., ii. 477.

⁵⁷ Knighton, ii. 47.

a truce for a year, it was only the better to vindicate their nationality. Instead of playing the rôle of conqueror, Edward's tulchan king had to be content to fill the office of warden of Caerlaverock Castle, on the Solway, in prudent proximity to the English border, in daily fear of attack from the angry Scots after the English magnates had marched homewards with their meagre spoil.⁵⁸

The Scots were by no means so cowed or so willing to acknowledge Edward's puppet, as the English annalist would have us believe. They found a champion in Lord William Douglas, son of Sir Archibald, and nephew of the good Lord James, who returned from France in the following year, 1348, and was appointed by the Steward governor of Edinburgh Castle in succession to Sir David Lyndsay. He first chased the English out of Douglasdale, and then, collecting a large force in Ettrick forest, he continued operations with equal success in Tweeddale. He next put to flight the English garrison of Roxburgh Castle, under Sir John Copeland, David's captor at Neville's Cross, which made an attempt to dispute his progress in Teviotdale. Under his powerful protection the greater part of the inhabitants of these districts threw off allegiance to Edward.⁵⁹ He was probably also the hero of a raid into England itself in retaliation for Edward's refusal to ransom their king, which wrought the usual havoc in the way of pillage and murder. In response the northern magnates challenged the marauders to a tournament at Berwick, where they set upon them and drove them beyond the border with consider-

⁵⁸ Knighton, ii. 47.

⁵⁹ Wyntoun, ii. 481; cf. Froissart, v. 224.

able loss, and followed up this treacherous performance by a counter raid into the southern counties.⁶⁰ Further hostilities were stayed for the present by a truce to last to the following June, concluded on 22nd October 1348, and renewed from time to time during the next six years, while negotiations were being prosecuted for the liberation of David and a durable peace.⁶¹

We have again outrun events in other parts of the arena of our history, and must return to Edward and the siege of Calais. Edward stuck persistently to his purpose of starving out John de Vienne and his garrison throughout the autumn and winter of 1346-47. Reinforcements as well as supplies came to him from England.⁶² Endless were the skirmishes by land and sea, and even Froissart⁶³ is unequal to the task of recounting them, and saves us the temptation of trying the reader's patience with the recital of them. Suffice to say that Edward's method of starving John de Vienne into submission was slowly, but surely telling. While the army barred all help from the land side, his fleets kept up a strict blockade, which the daring Norman corsairs, Maraut and Mestriel, only occasionally succeeded in running, at great risk and considerable loss.⁶⁴ There was the usual attempt at mediation by the Pope, in the forlorn hope of saving Calais for Philip, and terminating the war. Clement VI., good man, had not even yet lost faith in letter writing,⁶⁵ and

⁶⁰ Knighton, ii. 56-57. The year is 1348.

⁶¹ Foedera, iii. 175.

⁶² Ibid., iii. 94-97.

⁶³ v. 145.

⁶⁴ Froissart, v. 146.

⁶⁵ See his letter, and Edward's reply in Avesbury, pp. 377-381 (15th January 1347).

Edward humoured him to the extent of receiving his nuncios, the Cardinals of Clermont and Naples, and appointing plenipotentiaries to treat for peace.⁶⁶ But he had made up his mind not to conclude a treaty without Calais, and he showed his usual facility for arguing his antagonist in the wrong, and transferring all blame to his shoulders. Even after Crecy and Neville's Cross he is still the injured party who deprecates war, and would sacrifice much to please the Pope, and effect a peaceable conclusion of the conflict. But the outrages of the Turk on the Armenians, and the decadence of the Cross in those eastern parts,⁶⁷ are of no avail as arguments, so long as Calais is untaken, and Philip is so "unreasonable" as to refuse to see that Calais was meant to be an English city—the Continental bulwark of insular England. This Philip will by no means see, and the cardinals went back to Avignon without hope in this world of carrying the farce of negotiation further. The Pope had not even the semblance of a fresh argument to justify him in keeping on repeating the old ones, and Edward was resolved that, as John de Vienne's rations were becoming ever smaller, Clement's rhetoric should not stop the process of diminution.

Diplomacy was meanwhile busy maintaining the tug-of-war in other directions, notably in Flanders, where the representatives of Philip and Edward were trying their hardest to pull the poor young count, Louis de Male, then a lad of fifteen, and son of him killed at Crecy, over to their side.⁶⁸ The diplomatic tug-of-war was mainly over the question of his mar-

⁶⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 92.⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 103.⁶⁸ *Avesbury*, p. 383.

riage—a political marriage, of course. Edward was eager to bestow upon him the hand of his daughter, Isabella. Philip's candidate was the daughter of the Duke of Brabant, who was now, like John of Hainault, on the side of the French monarch, politically at least, if not actively. Both sent agents to woo the Flemings and their count, who had returned from France to Ghent, in January 1347, and promised to eschew the tyrannic ways of his father, and govern as a constitutional potentate. Edward had the best of this political love-making, as far as the Flemings were concerned, for they still preferred, on both political and commercial grounds, the alliance of England to that of France, and had made a diversion in Edward's favour by laying unsuccessful siege to Bethune. But the count had a predilection for France, where he had been brought up by his mother, Margaret of Artois, and cherished a deep dislike to Edward for the death of his father at Crecy. The men of Ghent kept him under such strict supervision, however, that he was fain to make a show of yielding to the representations of Edward's ambassadors, in order to escape this irksome restraint. He even went the length of going in great state to the abbey of Berghes, near Dunkirk, to make the acquaintance of his future spouse. There he was received with great ceremony by Edward and Queen Philippa, on the 3rd March 1347, and actually affianced to the innocent Isabella, amid much parade of royal splendour and mutual endearment.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁹ See the terms of the contract in *Fœdera*, iii. 111-112. Edward undertook to dower his daughter with 25,000 livres a year till she should take possession of Ponthieu, Montreuil, and Provoste-Chastel, and gave her in addition 400,000 deniers d'or,

marriage was fixed to take place a fortnight after Easter, for Edward was anxious to seal this political match-making with the irrevocable stamp of wedlock. Thereupon the happy bridegroom returned to Ghent, and Queen Philippa and her ladies went back to Calais to get their wedding dresses ready. The wedding presents even were ordered against the auspicious day, and Edward's Court officials were working hard to arrange the celebration on a scale befitting the dignity of the crown of England.

Count Louis was meanwhile skilfully keeping up appearances, and Flanders was jubilant in expectation of the approaching event. Behind the scenes, however, Margaret of Artois was at work, cajoling, threatening her son to eschew the hated alliance, Philip and the Duke of Brabant abetting with all their might. In a paroxysm of fury she uncovered her bosom, and swore to cut off the pap that had suckled him, and throw it to the dogs, if he dared to wed a daughter of the man who had been the means of the death of her husband! Louis hardly needed this outburst to decide him to play false. But how to get out of the dilemma? The only escape was in flight to France, and on this he resolved in clever fashion. He was fond of hawking, and his guards had relaxed their strictness somewhat after his visit to Berghes. He would go a-hawking, therefore, and give them the slip, and ride off across the frontier, leaving Flanders and his bride to their fate for the present (end of March 1347). He accordingly set off one evening, and as the birds rose in the air, he scampered away after them with loud hallo, riding ever farther and ever more quickly afield, until, spurring his horse far beyond his companions, he

was soon lost to view, in full flight to Douai (Lille, says Muisis), before his guards could suspect or frustrate his intention. The news of his flight turned the laugh of Europe against Edward—which cursing only made more merry—and one need scarcely pity the young girl who was saved the infliction of an unwilling husband, or suppress a chuckle that the political tug-of-war ended in the discomfiture of the match-making diplomatists.⁷⁰

Philip followed up this diplomatic triumph by a tardy attempt to relieve Calais. The garrison and the inhabitants were in dire extremity, and successful blockade-runners were becoming ever fewer. Edward increased the difficulty of obtaining access from the sea by building a fort, armed with cannon and garrisoned with archers, whose practice was still more deadly than this primitive artillery, in a position commanding the mouth of the harbour. The appeals sent to Philip for succour became ever more urgent as the spring advanced, and in May he set about in earnest the task of relieving the town. Amiens was the rendezvous of the army, consisting mainly of the nobles and their retainers,—Philip disdaining the co-operation of the communal militia after Crecy—,⁷¹ whom he summoned to carry out the enterprise. The summons was promptly obeyed by the Dukes of Normandy and Orleans, his sons, Burgundy and Bourbon, the Counts of Foix, Valentinois, Savoy, and Ponthieu, John of Hainault, and other magnates. By the end of May, Froissart puts

⁷⁰ Froissart, v. 149-170; cf. Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 208-210; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 84-86; *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, i. 221-222, ii. 264-265. Count Louis shortly after married the daughter of the Duke of Brabant.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, v. 179.

him at the head of the conventional army of one hundred thousand men. He was in no hurry to march, however, in spite of the urgent entreaties of John de Vienne, but wasted some weeks during his slow movement northwards by way of Arras, Hesdin, Terouanne, in reprisals against the Flemings, who, at the instigation of Edward, had burst into Artois, and burned and plundered Aire, St Venant, and other places. The Flemings, too, would listen to no overtures on behalf of their runaway count, and had further roused Philip's resentment by refusing to allow a division of his army to approach Calais by Gravelines, the side on which the English encampment was most vulnerable.⁷² In order to force compliance, and at the same time punish their incorrigible hostility to France, Philip detached the Dukes of Normandy and Athenes, with a large force, to the assault of Cassel, and other frontier Flemish towns. Cassel was defended by a strong Anglo-Flemish garrison, which withstood the attack of the French with desperate pertinacity from morning to mid-day on the 8th June. The attack was so steadily maintained, in spite of severe losses, that the outworks were taken, and the garrison driven into the town. At this critical moment, the timely arrival of reinforcements, Flemings and German mercenaries, changed the fortune of the day, and compelled the duke to retreat, but not before a large number had been killed on either side.⁷³

⁷² Froissart, v. 178.

⁷³ For an account of this battle, see the Chronicle of Valenciennes, which is more complimentary to the French than that of Avesbury, p. 384.

The invaders were more successful at Lieu St Vast, which they surprised one morning early, massacring every soul that fell into their hands. The same fate was meted out to several places in the neighbourhood before the Flemings were able to pounce on the straggling French columns, and retaliate by the slaughter of large numbers of their enemy. In such aimless skirmishing did Philip allow the precious weeks to pass, giving Edward ample time to summon the Earls of Lancaster and Oxford, Gloucester, Hereford, &c., with reinforcements from England, and to strengthen his fleet in the Channel.⁷⁴ Henceforth not a ship could enter the harbour, and the dog, cat, and horse flesh, to which the garrison was now reduced for a scanty meal, must soon be eaten up. On the 25th June some French ships made a forlorn attempt to steal into the harbour. On that day the Earls of Northampton and Pembroke, and Lords Morley, Talbot, and Bradston, cruising off Boulogne and Crotoy, espied a fleet of forty-four sail, laden with provisions, making towards Calais. They at once started in pursuit. The crews of the rear vessels threw their cargoes into the sea and made their escape, some seawards into the Channel, some towards Crotoy. Those in the van ran ashore, hotly followed by their pursuers, and their crews jumped into the sea and swam to land through the surf in order to escape capture. When the English came up, they found only one man on board, and took no less than thirteen vessels heavily laden with victuals. Next morning the quick eye of an English captain, William Roke, sighted two boats sneaking out of the harbour of

⁷⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 120 (14th May 1347); cf. Froissart, v. 151.

Calais, and straightway made chase. One of the boats put about and managed to reach the harbour. The other was driven ashore, and its Genoese captain and his crew taken prisoners. The captain was observed, just before he was taken, to tie a letter to an axe, and throw it overboard. When the tide ebbed, the letter was found, and the story it told of the suffering of the garrison was a harrowing one. "Know, most dear and dread lord," wrote the hapless John de Vienne, "that although the people are all well and in good spirits, the town has great need of corn, wine, and meal. Everything is eaten up,—dogs, cats, horses,—and we have nothing left to subsist on, unless we eat each other. You wrote me to hold out as long as there was anything to eat, and now we have reached the direst extremity. We have therefore agreed, if succour come not immediately, to sally out into the open and fight for life or death. For we would rather die on the field with honour than eat each other. Wherefore, most dear and dread lord, make an effort to help us, for if remedy cannot be speedily devised you shall see no more letters from me, and the town will be lost and every soul within it."⁷⁵

Had Philip received this despairing letter it might have quickened his movements. Fully a month passed, during which the heroic John de Vienne and his garrison were left face to face with starvation, before the fluttering banners of Philip's host, unfurled in the sea breeze, appeared on the Sandgatte, a couple of leagues from Calais.⁷⁶ There was jubilation within the walls, but several days passed, and

⁷⁵ Avesbury, pp. 384-386.

⁷⁶ Froissart, v. 185.

still there was no sign of a forward movement. John de Vienne, gaunt and weak, paced the ramparts in anxious expectation, and made despairing fire signals to the French camp after nightfall.⁷⁷ He could only guess the cause of this delay, for not a soul could enter Calais by land or water. Reconnoitring, doubtless; deliberating on the plan of attack, thinks John de Vienne consolingly. Philip and his captains were indeed engaged in anxious confabulation, but unfortunately for John de Vienne and his garrison, there was not a man who could solve the problem of an effective assault on the English camp. There were three ways of attempting to approach the walls. One was over the downs by the shore; but Edward's fleet, with its cannon and its still more dangerous archers, was moored within range, and would clearly play havoc with any advance shorewards. Besides, there was the narrow bridge of Nieulay, which spanned the Hens, to cross, even if the army should reach the environs of the town, and this bridge was strongly held by the Earl of Lancaster. There was the approach by Gravelines on the eastern side of the town, but here, too, the way was barred by a large force of Flemings, who had come to succour the English king. As a third alternative, Philip might try to force the English lines midway between these extremes, but in that case he would have to pass over marshy ground. The most hazardous enterprise of the three, plainly, and not to be attempted against archers so true in their aim as those who had done such terrible execution at Crecy. So judged Philip with reasonable prudence. But might not his enemy of England come out and fight on equal terms

⁷⁷ Baker, p. 176.

in the open country? To keep his army on defensive ground as at Crecy might be good tactics ; it was not fair play, from the chivalrous point of view. To this alternative, Edward, if we may trust his own report,⁷⁸ agreed on the 1st August, after much parliamentation between his representatives and those of Philip, two cardinals assisting. Let four knights from each side choose the ground on which the two armies should contend in fair combat, and have done with it. Such was the conclusion come to by Edward on Wednesday, the 1st August. Friday, the 3rd, should decide the fate of Calais. Philip did not await the issue of this chivalrous device. Before daybreak on Thursday, the French, after burning their tents in non-heroic haste, were in full retreat, the English in hot pursuit, capturing a considerable quantity of baggage and harassing their rear. "We must leave Calais to its fate," said Philip, rather supinely ; "better to lose a town than place in jeopardy the lives of one hundred thousand men. If we lose it now, we may retake it another time."⁷⁹

John de Vienne beheld with consternation the vanishing hope of succour, and prepared to make an honourable surrender. Mounting the ramparts on the 4th of August, he made a sign that he wished to parley. When Sir Walter de Manny and Lord Basset drew near, "Gentlemen," said the brave captain, "we have done our best to hold this town for our master, the King of France. Succour having failed us, we must die of hunger, if your king do not

⁷⁸ See his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in Avesbury, pp. 391-393. Froissart says he did not, which seems more likely, but we are bound to accept Edward's own assertion.

⁷⁹ Froissart, v. 197.

pity us. I entreat you, therefore, to prevail with him to let us pass forth, and we will render the town into his hands." "Master John," replied Sir Walter, "we know the mind of our king. You must surrender unconditionally, to be ransomed or delivered over to death as it shall please our sovereign, for you have caused him so much loss and labour, and the men of Calais have in times past done so much damage to his ships by their piracies, that he is in no mood for compromise." "We have only done our duty to our king at great cost of suffering and misery," returned John de Vienne, "and will brave everything before we will consent to give up the town except with the assurance of the safety of the humblest as well as the highest. But go, we beseech you, to your king, and intercede for us, for we hope better things of his goodness." "With all my heart," replied the chivalrous Sir Walter. He found Edward waiting his return, surrounded by his great barons, Lancaster, Northampton, Arundel, and others. "What news?" asked Edward. "Sire," replied Sir Walter, "we have made known your will, and John de Vienne is determined to resist to the uttermost rather than give up the town at your bidding, but he has asked me to appeal to your generosity." "He shall surrender at discretion," cried Edward angrily, "or take the consequences." "Sire," replied Sir Walter, "consider well lest you set an evil example in this. If you put these brave men to death, your enemy will do likewise in similar case to your soldiers, and you will not easily get men to garrison your fortresses in France." This argument was endorsed by the lords present, and Edward at last consented to modify his ultimatum. "Let

the commander," said he, "send forth six of the most notable burghers, with halters round their necks and the keys of the town in their hands. On them I shall wreak my vengeance, the others I shall spare."

With this message Sir Walter returned to John de Vienne, who was anxiously awaiting him on the ramparts. Thereupon the valiant commander summoned the citizens by sound of bell to the marketplace, whither they flocked in eager expectation. It was a touching scene, for on hearing the harsh ultimatum the gaunt and miserable crowd broke into lamentation and weeping, the brave old captain mingling his tears with theirs. At length one of the wealthiest burghers, Eustace de St Pierre, came forward. "Sir," said he, "I can no longer behold my fellow-citizens dying of hunger. I have hope in God's mercy if I must die to save the people, and I offer myself to go on this mission for their sake." Five others followed his example, and divesting themselves of their upper garments, and placing halters round their necks, they were led by John de Vienne on horseback (he was so weak that he could not walk), amid the lamentations of the women and children, and the tears of their fellow-citizens, to the gate, bearing the keys of the town and the castle in their hands. They were received by Walter de Manny, and led into the presence of the king, with whom was the queen, in an advanced state of pregnancy, and the whole Court. Edward eyed them harshly as they knelt and supplicated mercy, every eye but his moist with tears, as they touchingly professed their willingness to die for their fellow-citizens. With the exasperating memory of the ravages of

Calais corsairs in his mind⁸⁰ (there were no English corsairs, of course), he could not summon up sufficient magnanimity to do a noble and gracious act of his own accord, and ordered them to instant execution. "Gracious sire," implored Walter de Manny, "restrain your anger, and spare these honest men, who have of their own accord placed themselves in your power to save their fellows." "Master Walter," cried Edward, gnashing his teeth, "no more of this. Let the executioner do his duty. Calais has cost me so many men, that it is but meet that these should die." "Sire," entreated the queen, kneeling and weeping, "for the love of Christ and me, have mercy on these men, and grant me their lives as a gift." Edward looked at her for a little in silence. "I would you had not asked me this, but I cannot refuse your request," said he, "though I comply with the greatest reluctance. Take them, and do with them whatsoever seemeth good to you." This was at least chivalrous, and the overjoyed queen led them into her chamber, and gave them food and clothing, and a present of six nobles each, and sent them forth the host in safety.⁸¹

Edward then sent Walter de Manny, with a small

⁸⁰ The assumption that this was a prearranged scene, put forward by some modern historians, seems to me a superficial judgment, not warranted by the facts. Edward undoubtedly hated the inhabitants of Calais, from which French squadrons had often sallied forth to ravage the coasts of England. The long siege, too, had exasperated him.

⁸¹ Besides Froissart, v. 198-216; Baker, pp. 174-178; Knighton, ii. 46-54; Avesbury, pp. 377-406; Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 205-207; Corpus Chron. Flandriæ, i. 219-221 and 222-223, ii. 270-274, should be consulted for this and other events of a memorable siege.

force, to take possession of the town, pending his own triumphal entry. He set the inhabitants adrift, to make way for an English population.⁸² Calais became an English colony, and was to remain for over two hundred years the bulwark and the vantage ground of England against France. He spent two months in his new conquest, carefully strengthening its defences and arranging for its government before returning to England (tempest-tossed as usual by Philip's necromancers by the way⁸³) on the 12th October.

It was at Calais that the news of another brilliant success—this time in Brittany—came to him.⁸⁴ Since the arrival of the Earl of Northampton's expedition in the summer of 1345, hostilities had been kept up in Brittany in spasmodic fashion. John de Montfort, who, as we have seen, accompanied him, died three months afterwards (26th September 1345), leaving Edward guardian of his son and champion of his rights. Northampton was less energetic than Derby in Gascony, and effected little of importance, beyond the capture of Carhaix and Roche-Derieu,⁸⁵ before his return to England in the spring of 1346. The conduct of the war was then entrusted to Sir Thomas d'Agworth, a knight of the stamp of Walter de Manny. He infused more spirit into the operations against Charles of Blois, which culminated in the notable feat of the relief of Roche-Derieu. Roche-Derieu was closely invested by Charles with a large force in June 1347, which kept pounding the walls

⁸² *Fœdera*, iii. 130 (12th August 1347).

⁸³ *Walsingham*, i. 271-272.

⁸⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 134.

⁸⁵ According to the *Grandes Chroniques*, v. 443-444, Roche-Derieu surrendered in December 1345.

with huge siege engines, one of which threw a projectile of the weight of 300 lbs. ! The garrison was reduced to great straits. The news of their extremity being brought to Sir Thomas at Hennebont, he set out with an Anglo-Breton force to its relief. On the evening of the 19th June, he arrived at a point about two leagues from the besieging army. Towards midnight, he set out with a portion of the force to surprise his antagonist, who, warned by his scouts of the approach of the English, had taken the precaution of cutting down the hedges and filling up the ditches for half a league round his camp, so as to deprive the archers of the advantage of their protection.⁸⁶ About an hour before daybreak, Sir Thomas burst on the French position. In the first confusion of the shock, the French had the worst of it, but rallying, after suffering considerable loss, they succeeded, by force of numbers, in maintaining their ground, and even took the English commander prisoner. The remainder of the Anglo-Breton army hurrying up to the rescue, and the garrison sallying out at the same time to co-operate with it, a second combat began, which ended in the discomfiture and capture of Charles, and the rout of his army with severe loss.⁸⁷ Charles was carried a prisoner to England, to keep the King of Scotland company in the Tower, while the Countess of Blois and her rival, the Countess of Montfort, continued the struggle for the possession of Brittany.

⁸⁶ See D'Agworth's letter in Avesbury, p. 389.

⁸⁷ Such appears to be the true story of this engagement by comparison of the accounts of Froissart (v. 167-177), Sir Thomas himself, and the Chronicle of Valenciennes. D'Agworth says nothing of his own temporary defeat and capture.

In these propitious circumstances Edward accepted with alacrity the offer of Pope Clement to mediate a truce. The two cardinals again went to work, and through their skilful manipulation the representatives of the two monarchs finally agreed to sheathe the sword once more from the 28th September to the 24th June following. Their allies were included in the agreement, and peace reigned for a season in this war-convulsed world of 1347. The Pope is seen to advantage in such transactions, and if we may look anywhere in this distracted world, cursed by the brutal passions and the awful miseries of a savage warfare, for a trace of Christian charity and goodwill, it is in this laudable effort to soothe the bitter resentments productive of this unhappy state of things. All honour to Clement, therefore, and his peacemaking cardinals. It is a Christian world after all, that world of carnage and pillage, if its Christianity, in spite of much parade of religiosity, is but skin deep!

The allies agreed to observe the following, among other stipulations :—The Count of Flanders to cease from troubling his rebellious subjects during this interval; all denunciations made in the churches of Tournay and Cambrai against the Flemings to be stopped forthwith; both kings to refrain from fomenting mischief against each other in Flanders or elsewhere; all sieges to cease in Guienne and Brittany; and wardens of the truce to be appointed on either side.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ The truce is given by Avesbury, pp. 396-402.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BLACK DEATH (1348-1351).

UNWONTED prosperity and luxury were the effects of the English victories over the French, and though the chroniclers do not say so, it must be added, of the pillage of France. "It seemed to the English," remarks the annalist, with patriotic pride, "as if a new sun had burst over the land, so great plenty was there of everything, and so splendid the triumph of their arms."¹ The spoils of Caen and Calais, and other pillaged cities, adorned the homes of Edward's warriors. English ladies evidently did not consider it beneath them to don the garments of many a ransacked French wardrobe, to make up the cloths of Caen and other pillaged Norman towns in gorgeous dresses, and deck themselves in stolen jewels. Even in their kitchens the utensils of France were to be found, and on their tables its linen and plate. The code of honour of the time, it is but fair to add, found no offence in these things. The grandest noble in England, or in France either, would not have been ashamed to wear his neighbour's coat. To fight for glory might be a grand thing, especially in the pages of the romancer; to fight for spoil is the real secret of this fourteenth-century warfare, and even Froissart, the panegyrist of knightly prowess *par excellence*, has a

¹ Walsingham, i. 272.

good word to say for the professional marauder. Fourteenth-century warfare being not merely a system of licensed murder, which war always is and will be, but a system of licensed robbery, it is the noble profession of a knightly gentleman to rob as well as kill, when his liege lord takes it into his head to pick a quarrel with a brother potentate. It was the pillage of France, not the pretension to its crown, that made the war in any appreciable sense a national undertaking. When, at the end of the eighteenth century, Napoleon plundered Italy, and sent the spoils to France, there was a shout of indignation from scandalised Europe. When 450 years earlier Edward pillaged France, and sent his fleet, heavy laden with plunder, across the Channel, Europe regarded the performance as an excellent stroke of business, and doubtless envied the housewives of England their good luck.

Whilst English armies conquered France, French fashions conquered England. "Then began the matrons of England to pose in the habits of the matrons of Celtic Gaul, and as these latter mourned for the loss of their gear, so the former rejoiced in their rich acquisitions."² English chivalry gave itself up to the intoxication of its good fortune in merry relaxation from the toils of campaigning. The autumn and winter of 1347-1348 were one long heyday of tournaments, feasting, sports, plays, the Order of the Garter being instituted at this time in honour of the more distinguished warriors. Revelry sometimes outstripped the bounds of decency, for to these spectacles of knightly relaxation at Windsor and elsewhere came crowds of fair women, whose

² Walsingham, i. 272.

manners and shocking attire, which the modern woman might study with advantage, rouse the indignation of the honest chronicler.³ The fame of Edward overshadowed Europe, and brought him a flattering tribute in the offer of the imperial crown by the Electors of Maintz, the Rhine Palatine, and Brandenburg on the death of Kaiser Ludwig in October 1347.⁴ With more good sense than he had displayed over the question of the succession to the French crown, he refused the honour in favour of Charles of Bohemia, the Pope's candidate, in view of the embarrassments which would accrue from the conjunction of the imperial dignity with the English crown.

This display of luxury and prosperity was in reality very superficial. The war had profited the spoiler; it had not benefited the English nation. France had been impoverished, but England was not enriched. Edward and his great war lords and lesser notabilities, with their followers, had made a good thing out of the plunder of fertile, industrial Normandy. If Edward was not *de facto* King of France, and the gear of the English taxpayer had as lief been thrown into the sea as far as the realisation of the professed object of the war was concerned, they at least had profited by the brigandage which was accounted the fitting profession of a chivalrous gentleman in this glorious fourteenth century. But the English taxpayer was the poorer for their opulence, and in spite of Crecy and Calais the English taxpayer was wincing under the burden imposed on him, and was in no mood to indulge in

³ Knighton, ii. 57-58.

⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 161; cf. Villani in *Classici Italiani*, cliii. 250-251.

ecstasies of triumph. Had he not been systematically fleeced by these omnipresent collectors and rascally purveyors these ten years past in spite of all his grumbling in Parliament and out? Edward had kept this chronic irritation under restraint by promises and patriotic speeches, but the taxpayer was beginning to feel that he was being swindled. For the glory of England doubtless. Only the glory of England, it was becoming ever more patent, meant the ambition of a martial monarch, and the mercenary advantage of the fighting men who saw in the war an expedient for enriching themselves at the expense of France, and in reality of England as well. Honest John Bull was getting impatient at this long-continued process of sponging him for such ends, and the high-handed devices to which Edward had more than once descended in order to hoodwink and squeeze him were being found out. Had he not in the spring of 1347 filched an additional twenty thousand sacks of wool under the plausible pretext of a loan, ordained by the regent and his council without consultation with the Commons, and levied so many sacks from each county accordingly?⁵ Had he not, too, wheedled an increase of customs out of the merchants,⁶ which meant that the consumer must pay in enhanced prices for their compliant patriotism? Had not the financiers of Florence—the Bardi, the Peruzzi, the Corsini, &c.—to whom Edward owed vast sums (900,000 gold florins to the Bardi alone, 600,000 to the Peruzzi), gone bankrupt?⁷ And did not this

⁵ Knighton, ii. 52-53.

⁶ Ibid., ii. 53.

⁷ Villani in *Classici Italiani*, cliii. 141-143; cf. *Rot. Par.*, ii. 240.

mean that Edward would squeeze the English taxpayer yet more hardly, since the negotiation of foreign loans would be difficult, if not impossible in the future? No, John Bull's faith in royal promises, his faith in a war which was ruining him for the benefit of these noble, patriotic cavaliers of the Court and the camp, has fallen below zero. In these circumstances, John Bull takes refuge in the dogged old English device of a petition to his majesty. He has an inconvenient way of speaking in plain English of his grievances, after provocation has reached a certain stage, even to his king, and in the Parliament which met in January 1348, his remonstrances are both lengthy and loud. It is from the dry rolls of Parliament, not from the ecstasies of patriotic courtiers and chroniclers, that we learn the true state of public feeling at this period of victory, luxury, and courtly pleasures. If Edward has returned glorious and triumphant, there is not much trace of the fact in John Bull's official utterances. Hodge, too, is evidently in no jubilant mood, but Hodge being a serf living in a miserable hut, is a person of no importance, except as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, poor devil. It will be five hundred years before Hodge becomes anything like a political factor (except when he takes it into his head to rise in abortive rebellion, which he will do shortly), though he is indispensable to the well-being of a wool-growing country. But Hodge's master—the squires and yeomen of England—along with the representatives of the towns, already feel their political dignity, and ventilate their grievances in sturdy English around their own firesides, and in sixty-four petitions in Norman

French in Parliament. The war had ceased to excite their interest, except in as far as it affected their pockets, for on being asked to give their opinion as to what course should be adopted at the expiry of the truce, the Commons replied that they were so ignorant and simple in matters of foreign policy that they could give no advice, and prayed the king to submit the question to the wisdom of his council.⁸ Disgusted and disheartened evidently with a struggle that neither fighting nor negotiation will end. Which fact, if the king could read between the lines, he might perceive from the tenor of the petitions which they next proceeded to lay before him. Let the king, they pray, have pity on the hardships and charges from which the Commons suffer and have suffered. Let him see to it that the laws are maintained, and that his ministers who have neglected to take the oath, as prescribed by Parliament, be sworn to perform their functions in accordance with justice. Let him, instead of wasting his strength in these foreign expeditions (this by inference of course), attend to the defence of the border, so that his northern subjects may be spared a repetition of the cruel invasion lately frustrated at Neville's Cross. Let the wool market at Bruges, where the staple is established, be declared free, so that the wool merchants of all countries may buy at a fair price, and the English wool-grower reap the advantage. Let the industrial monopoly of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres, which also keeps prices low, be abolished. Let him cancel the additional taxes on wool, wine, and other merchandise, lately imposed by the regent and his council without consent of

⁸ Rot. Par., ii. 165.

Commons. Let him put a stop to those oppressive commissions of array, issued without consent of Parliament, and therefore illegal. Let the issuers of false money (Lushbournes) be hanged, according to Act of Parliament, and the justices be admonished to be more observant of their duty in this matter. Let him put a curb on the exactions of his household officials and their servants who plunder the people on the pretext of purveyance, by directing that they shall take nothing except by mandate of the marshal of the household, and permission of the constables of the towns, and shall pay for what they receive. Let the monopoly of tin in the hands of a foreign merchant cease, likewise the maltôte on wool, and the heavy tax on manufactured cloth, whether home or foreign. Let him cease squandering the crown lands, and inquire why it is that he derives so little revenue from his lands in Ireland for the support of the war, and punish those guilty of peculation; inquire, too, into the extortions of those commissioned to assess lands and towns for the royal militia. Let him prohibit the merchants who have farmed the customs on wool from extorting two marks a sack beyond the customary tax, and thus ruining the smaller traders. Let him amend the misconduct of the forest officials, who oppress the people in contravention of the forest laws, and check the malpractices of the collectors of wool and other taxes, who take overweight, and otherwise cheat the lieges. Let him take energetic measures against the abuse of reservations, which the Pope still practises in defiance of former enactments and proclamations, as contrary to the right of free election and detrimental to religion. Finally,

let him enforce the laws against the murders, abductions, homicides, violation of women, and other felonies rampant in the land, and grant no pardon to such criminals without consent of Parliament.⁹

To this bulky indictment of his government (for it was nothing less), Edward responded in the usual style of mingled concession and evasion, and Parliament was prorogued without the enactment of a single statute based on any of these demands. A few weeks later (31st March) it met again at the urgent summons of the king, who had, it seems, discovered proofs of his adversary's bad faith, and charged him with making preparations for an invasion of England. This was probably a mere subterfuge for making a fresh demand for money. To this demand the Commons replied by a fresh enumeration of abuses, followed by a new roll of petitions for their removal, which Edward, of course, received in his suavest manner, and concluded by the offer of a subsidy on certain conditions. If the king would undertake not to turn the sum to be granted into wool, and strictly abide by the terms of the grant; cease to exact the tax of forty shillings on the sack of wool, on the expiry of the stipulated period of three years, which was pending; receive no subsidy from the merchants, which would consequently lessen the price of wool; on no account impose any burden without consent of Parliament, and observe his promises in respect of petitions; restore the twenty thousand sacks of wool extorted by the council under pretext of a loan; exact no aid on account of the marriage of his daughter, and on no account accept ransom for David of Scotland,

⁹ For these petitions, see Rot. Par., ii. 165-174.

William Douglas, and other Scottish captives ; enter these stipulations on the rolls of Parliament as a guarantee of good faith, then his poor Commons, hard up though they were, would furnish a fifteenth annually for three years.¹⁰

Distrust of the king is clearly the ruling thought in the minds of the Commons. Grinding taxation and the abuses of administration for which remedy had so often been sought and promised in vain, had soured and depressed the nation. The tergiversation by which monarch and ministers had filched so much gear and money from the taxpayer in their hunt after glory and conquest, was evidently played out. To the moralist, if not to the taxpayer, there is some consolation in the fact. Truth, even in politics, is of some importance, and this policy of dodge; of twisting words to make them imply what is not meant, of leading people by the nose with glib phrases which to politicians of the Edwardian type, is the noble art of politics, is evidently becoming an abomination in the sight of honest John Bull. It is altogether a sorry business this of clothing lies in the garment of truth for political ends, and yet the government of the world, usually ascribed to Providence, has too often been nothing else than the art of the trickster. To make the world believe what is not true, to wear the mien of the honest man while studying how to take advantage of the honest man's credulity, to wheedle him in the service of some purpose deemed national and imperative—this is far too much the noble task of the kingship and the

¹⁰ Rot. Par., ii. 200-201. For the petitions presented in this Parliament, which are mainly a repetition of those presented two months before, see *ibid.*, ii. 201-204.

government in this fourteenth as in other centuries. Politics and Providence! John Bull, with his hand in his empty pocket, and a consequent tendency to look facts straight in the face, may be excused for not seeing the connection which his parson (to judge from the chroniclers), who mistakes his own fancies for facts, knows how to prove to demonstration in his edifying discourses.

For three years to come Edward's conscience was not again probed by parliamentary remonstrance. The Black Death, of which more anon, came in as a handy and certainly a valid reason for postponing its meeting, ever an unwelcome alternative, except when supply had run out. When it did meet, in February 1351, it succeeded in obtaining the royal assent to two important petitions which were turned into statutes—the Statute of Labourers, of which hereafter, and the Statute of Provisors, which, proceeding on the model of that of Edward I., accentuated the right of free election in the English Church, and declared illegal the papal practice of reserving benefices for aliens. For the next four years there was an annual session in deference to the necessity of keeping the king in funds, with the ever recurring phenomena of remonstrance, petition, and response, filling out many pages of the Rolls, where we light on two noteworthy statutes, that of *Præmunire* in 1353, which declared forfeiture and outlawry against those who carried suits furth the realm in defiance of the jurisdiction of the Royal Courts,¹¹ and that of Treason, which decreed death and forfeiture against those guilty of the murder of the king, of the queen, or the ministers of the crown, con-

¹¹ Statutes, i. 329.

spiracy, insurrection, &c.¹² Another piece of legislation enacted in 1353¹³ was of considerable economic importance. The discontent at the extortions of the Flemish merchants, already ventilated in preceding sessions, compelled Edward to discontinue the staple of English wool at Bruges, and to ordain that henceforth staples should be established at Newcastle, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Westminster, Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Exeter, Bristol for England, Carmarthen for Wales, and Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Drogheda for Ireland, and the customs levied there.¹⁴ The English wool-grower hoped by this expedient to obtain a better price for his wool. The expectation was not realised, however, for the foreign consumer, who was the main buyer, naturally enough sought to recompense himself for the expense and risk to which the ordinance exposed him by buying as cheaply as possible, and shortly after the staple was fixed at Calais.¹⁵

Such experiments in practical statesmanship were, after all, but incidental digressions from the main pursuit of Edward's existence—the wild goose chase after a crown which did not and never would belong to him, except in the form of an empty title. Though John Bull doled out his annual subsidy (wool sub-

¹² Rot. Par., ii. 239; Statutes, i. 320, enacted in 1352.

¹³ The assembly is called a Grand Council, but it was practically a Parliament, being attended by representatives of all the orders (Rot. Par., ii. 246). If this was an attempt to encroach on the rights of Parliament in the interest of autocratic government, it did not succeed, as regular Parliaments continued to be summoned and to increase their power.

¹⁴ For the ordinances bearing on the subject, see Rot. Par., ii. 246-251.

¹⁵ Ibid., ii. 268.

sidy, to which the clergy added a tenth, in 1351,¹⁶ a tenth and a fifteenth in 1352,¹⁷ a tax on wool, wool-fells, and leather for three years in 1353¹⁸), coupled with the rehearsal of his many afflictions from bad government, he was getting increasingly sick of the whole business. On one occasion this feeling found decided utterance. "Do you desire a treaty of perpetual peace if it can be had?" asked the chamberlain, Bartholomew de Burghersh, of the assembled Lords and Commons during the session of 1354. "Aye, aye," came the unanimous chorus of hearty voices.¹⁹ Had the parliamentary scribe pricked his ears he would doubtless have heard an expletive characteristic of English impatience, when not under parliamentary control, "Devil take the war."

The heyday of luxury and pleasure that followed Crecy and Calais suffered a terrible eclipse in the ravages of the Black Death. The advent of this awful scourge, in which the chroniclers see the castigation of Heaven for the sins of men, was heralded, in the eye of superstition, by strange portents in heaven and earth. The astrologers deduced from the motions of the planets the approach of some dire calamity. Torrential rains; "an extraordinary dreadful comet;"²⁰ a star shining brilliantly over Paris in full daylight, and disappearing at nightfall;²¹ an eclipse of the moon; a pillar of fire irradiating in unearthly fashion the papal palace at Avignon; earthquake shocks, accompanied by terrible tempests; showers

¹⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 229.

¹⁷ Ibid., ii. 242.

¹⁸ Ibid., ii. 252.

¹⁹ Ibid., ii. 262. Et les dites comunes responderent entiere-ment et uniement, Oil, oil.

²⁰ Villani in Cl. Ital., cliii. 234-235.

²¹ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 210-211.

of blood in Germany ; igneous vapours belched from the bowels of the earth in Cathay and India ; the appearance of strange monsters, such as a double-headed serpent, with faces like those of a woman, and great wings like a bat, which sorely affrighted the honest folk of Chippingnorton ; miscarriages and monstrous births among women,—conveyed to a terror-stricken world the foreboding of doom. Men bethought them with horror of Friar Robert's prognostications of damnation thirty years before. From China and India the grim visitant advanced, between the years 1347 and 1350, with fatal persistence, pursuing its lugubrious progress along the great trade routes from Asia Minor into Greece, and thence to Italy, France, Spain, the Low Countries, Germany, England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, and eventually Russia. Famine in many countries—the result of drought, floods, or the ravages of war—prepared the soil for the harvest of death, while the filthy state of European as well as Oriental cities provided a fertile atmosphere for the spread of the pestilential contagion. Strange to say, it attacked by preference the young and strong, and but sparingly the infirm and aged.²² Disgusting boils in the groin and the armpits, and often over the whole body,²³ accompanied by spitting of blood, fluxes of blood from the bowels, and a parching fever which nothing could assuage, and ending in delirium or apathetic insensibility—certain forerunner of death—were the usual symptoms. The putrid inflammation of the respiratory organs, the black tongue, the blood-charged expectoration poisoned

²² Baker, p. 190 ; Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 211.

²³ Ibid., p. 190 ; Ibid., ii. 211.

the air with a pestiferous stench, and made it certain destruction to breathe the same atmosphere or even touch any article impregnated by this foul miasma. Few of those attacked withstood more than a day or two the torments of fever and putrefaction that made death a happy release, and drove many to hasten its advent by their own hands. The medical knowledge of the age was impotent to cure or assuage the sufferings of the victims. Few physicians had the courage to attend those seized with the terrible malady, and even the priests shunned the beds of the dying.²⁴ Parents forsook their children, children their parents, in the wild panic which its outbreak bore from place to place. But even the fugitives were not safe, for to have once breathed that pestilential atmosphere in the overcrowded filthy cities, or even to have looked into the eye of the sick, was to be undone. In gardens, woods, fields, desert places, the plague followed the fugitives, and struck down its victims with fell and remorseless certainty. Even on the sea there was no escape, if one had breathed but for a moment in the affected zone, and ships were discovered drifting in the Mediterranean and the North Sea, or driving ashore, with not a living being on board.

Its virulence may be judged from the frightful numbers of its victims. In the East whole towns and districts, nay, whole countries, according to some reports, were depopulated. In Cyprus hardly a soul escaped. In many places only one out of ten,²⁵ ac-

²⁴ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 211.

²⁵ Li Muisis in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, ii. 341; cf. Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 211; Walsingham (i. 273) says that it carried off nine-tenths of the population.

according to some chroniclers but one out of twenty, survived. The figures of the annalists may not be accurate, but they are at least in keeping with the terror-stricken assertions of contemporaries as to the awful mortality in every land. Venice, for example, is credited with 100,000 victims; Florence with 60,000; Sienna, 70,000; Avignon, 60,000; Paris, 50,000 (800 a day); St Denis, 14,000; Strasburg, 16,000; Basle, 14,000; London, 100,000, at the very lowest estimate; Norwich, 57,000. At Avignon, the city of the Pope, it was especially virulent, and the chroniclers exaggerate its horrors by stories of putrid blood oozing from the trenches into which the dead were hastily thrown, and staining the streams. On one day alone 1,312 people were carried off, on another over 400. The college of English monks was decimated, and Pope Clement shared the general terror, and shut himself up in his palace, keeping large fires constantly burning as a preventive. At Montpellier, Marseilles, and other neighbouring towns, the visitation was equally severe. Out of 140 members of the order of the Friars Preachers at Montpellier only seven escaped. Of 150 Minor Friars at Marseilles not a soul remained to tell the tale.²⁶ In Germany the number of the dead reached a total of one and a quarter million, and Germany was less severely affected than France, Italy, England, and Scotland.²⁷ In the small parish of St Leonard's, at Leicester, alone there were over 380 victims, in that of the Holy Cross over 400, in that of St Margaret's 700, in the other parishes in proportion.²⁸ The dead were thrown in heaps into trenches as at Paris and

²⁶ Knighton, ii. 59. ²⁷ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 213.

²⁸ Knighton, ii. 61.

Vienna, or into the rivers, when this species of wholesale interment became impossible, as at Avignon, without the ceremonies of religion.

In England the dreadful scourge made its appearance in August 1348 at Dorchester, Southampton, Bristol,²⁹ whence it spread with fell rapidity all over the southern counties, reaching London in the beginning of November. From London it penetrated into the eastern and midland counties, raging with especial virulence at Norwich, Yarmouth, Leicester, York. Here, as on the Continent, the innumerable dead were thrown in heaps into trenches, the higher classes alone, which suffered far less than the lower,³⁰ obtaining the privilege of separate burial. In one field, near Smithfield, as many as 50,000 corpses were interred in this hasty fashion. On 1st January and 10th March the meeting of Parliament had to be postponed in consequence of the horrible mortality.³¹ The administration of justice ceased for want of judges to hear causes.³² In many churches divine service was suspended, the priests having died or fled, and for months candidates for vacant benefices could not be had for ten times the usual stipend,³³ though after the terrible visitation had passed, there was a rush of illiterate widowers from among the lower classes for the vacant vicarates. Many hamlets in England, as in France,³⁴ were completely depopulated, and the ruined, deserted houses told for years afterwards the mournful tale of the remorseless ravages of the angel of death. In the towns there

²⁹ Knighton, ii. 61; Baker, p. 189; Avesbury, p. 406.

³⁰ Baker, pp. 189-190.

³¹ *Fœdera*, iii. 180-182; cf. Rot. Par., ii. 225.

³² Baker, p. 190.

³³ Knighton, ii. 63.

³⁴ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 214.

was hardly a street that did not bear witness in similar tragic fashion of the sorrows of that sombre year.³⁵

From York it spread northward into Scotland in 1349. According to the English chroniclers, the cynic brutality of the Scots, who indulged in resentful wit-ticisms at "the foul death of the English," was punished by the sudden inroad of the pestilence with equally fatal results. The Scots had assembled an army in the forest of Selkirk, with intent to take advantage of the impotence of their plague-stricken enemy by a raid into England, when the mortality broke out in their camp with the same symptoms of loathsome corruption and certain dissolution, and carried off five thousand of them. The fugitives spread the contagion in all directions, and for fully a year on end³⁶ death and lamentation filled the land in punishment of their presumptuous mockery.³⁷ The English chroniclers perhaps looked at the affliction of the Scots with vindictive eyes, for their Scottish fellow-scribes tell us nothing of this shocking offence against humanity which was atoned for so dearly. In Scotland, as in England, it was the middle and lower classes that suffered most severely.³⁸ Here, too, panic broke asunder the closest ties of kin and friendship, "sons fleeing from their parents, for fear of the contagion, as from the face of a leper or an adder."³⁹ Both Wyntoun and Fordun estimate the rate of mortality at a third of the population.⁴⁰

³⁵ Knighton, ii. 64.

³⁶ Wyntoun, ii. 482.

³⁷ Knighton, ii. 62-63; Baker, pp. 190-191.

³⁸ Fordun, i. 369.

³⁹ Ibid., i. 369.

⁴⁰ Wyntoun, ii. 482. For notices of the plague more or less detailed see the chroniclers quoted.

Religious mania was the natural accompaniment of this terrible visitation, which appeared as a divine judgment on a godless world. In an age steeped in superstition, natural phenomena have a moral significance and effect which they cannot have in one better acquainted with the laws of nature, and more observant of the laws of health. Hence the universal inference that the pestilence was the avenging angel of an angry Heaven, whose bolt fell upon the evil-doer and the righteous alike. The end of the world was foreshadowed by this dreadful scourge, and in this very year 1348, an Oxford student, John Wicklif, destined to great eminence and influence, was penning "The Last Age of the Church," and prophesying the approaching advent of the Great Judge. Hence the stories of the temporary conversion of the infidel Saracen, notably of the King of Tharsis, who beheld in the ravages of the plague the punishment of his unbelief, until he perceived the awkward fact that it struck down Christian and Moslem alike, and with excusable logic returned to his own creed.⁴¹ Hence, too, the revival of the Brotherhood of the Flagellants, who, issuing from Hungary and Germany, went from town to town scourging each other in the cities through which they passed with scourges tipped with iron, and chanting mournful hymns of penitence. These processions were for a time highly popular, for the melancholy and despair of this tragic time turned to the consolations of religion for strength to bear its misery. These bands were swelled as they went by people of all classes, ages, and professions, as well as by priests, monks, and nuns. Here is a picture of one of them as seen by

⁴¹ Knighton, ii. 59.

a contemporary English scribe : " In the year of our Lord 1349, about the feast of St Michael, more than 120 men, for the most part from Zealand and Holland, who had wandered through Flanders, came to London. Sometimes in the church of St Paul, sometimes in other parts of the city, they appeared twice a day before the populace. From the thighs to the heels they were enveloped in a linen cloth, the rest of the body stark naked, except the head, which was covered with a hood, marked with a red cross before and behind. Each bore in his right hand a scourge with three cords ending in a knot perforated by a sharp nail. As they advanced in procession, they scourged their naked, bleeding bodies at each step, while four sang hymns in their native tongue, and four responded after the fashion of the litany used by the Christicoli. At every third step all threw themselves simultaneously on the ground, their hands extended in the shape of the cross, chanting continuously. And then the hindmost of those so prostrated, rising and making another step, struck his neighbour a blow with the scourge, and so from one to the other till the number was completed. Then each clothed himself with his customary garments, and with hooded heads and scourge in hand, they returned to their quarters. And there they performed the same penance by night as well as day, it is said."⁴²

This exaltation excited the jealousy and hostility of the clergy, to whose worldliness their fanatic devotion was a reproach, and who in their manners " imitated Epicurus rather than Christ," as a contemporary aptly observes. Ere long they were interdicted

⁴² Avesbury, pp. 407-408.

by the Pope as dangerous to orthodoxy and ecclesiastical order. One of the heretical enormities attributed to them was the refusal to do obeisance to the host or to the chalice! Nay, the blood of Christ was of less efficacy than that of their lacerated bodies in procuring the remission of sin! Such damnable heterodoxy set up the backs of the easy-going clergy, as jealous for sound doctrine and popular obedience as they were careless of sound morality. Moreover, the pure gold of moral feeling, intermingled with the superstition and ignorance of these votaries, became alloyed with the baser elements of the flesh, and the abuses which accrued from the promiscuous association of the sexes, afforded a more legitimate pretext for denunciation. On the 20th October 1349, Pope Clement fulminated a bull of condemnation against them as heretics and subverters of ecclesiastical order,⁴³ refused them entrance into Avignon, and stirred up persecution against them in France, Italy, and Germany. As soon as the terror of death had subsided, and the world returned to its old routine of strife and sin, the wave of morbid religious sentiment, which welcomed these well-intentioned fanatics as miracle workers and messengers of God, passed away like every religious revival that springs from an unenlightened emotion or an excited imagination.⁴⁴

The religious mania begotten by the plague found sinister expression in horrible outrages on the Jews, and in this case there could be no misgivings

⁴³ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 217-218.

⁴⁴ For the Flagellants, see Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 216-218; Froissart, v. 275-277; Avesbury, pp. 407-408; Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ, i. 226-227, which speaks of them as Lollards, and ii. 346, *et seq.*

as to its orthodoxy! Had they not poisoned the air by their incantations, and the wells by stealthily dropping packets containing poisonous concoctions into them? Were they not, too, the authors of the terrible pestilence?⁴⁵ So reasoned the people of Chillon, where their sufferings began in the autumn of 1348. So, too, reasoned the people of Bern and Freiburg, on the strength of confessions wrung from some tortured wretches, who hoped to put an end to their torments by confessing the crime which most probably only existed in the morbid imaginations of their Christian accusers. So, too, reasoned ere long the greater part of Christian Europe, and carefully sealed up wells and fountains to protect them from the Jewish poisoner. And Christian Europe reasoned so all the more readily inasmuch as it was so largely under obligation to the Jewish usurer, and was eager for a pretext to plunder him of his wealth (ill-gotten wealth some of it doubtless), and escape the disagreeable duty of paying its debts. Fanaticism and self-interest thus combined to their undoing, burning them in great batches—as many as twelve thousand in all in the city of Maintz alone—or driving them to burn themselves for fear of worse consequences. The damnable lying and superstition which led to these savage outrages* is a horrible stain on mediæval Christianity, which really stands no higher—in some of its moods at least—than African fetish worship. And this bloody cult dared to point the finger of scorn at the infidel, who could not be guilty of greater savagery, and was doubtless, like many Christians, thank God, a

⁴⁵ G. de Nangis, ii. 213-214, who, to his honour, condemns the insane and barbarous treatment of the Jews.

better man than his bloody creed. Verily, we need not go outside the annals of the Christian Church for a lesson in the pernicious, inhuman, degrading perversion which religious belief has exercised on heart and intellect. And the worst of it is that these savage wretches are unconscious for the most part of this perversion! nay, believe that they are acting in accordance with the precepts of the gospel. Good heavens! how much has priestly rule, acting on human stupidity, to account for before the judgment seat of God and man. And the blasphemy of the revolting business, who can measure it! Appropriate the patronage of heaven, and call it revelation, the will of God, true religion, or by other cant term, and commit the most sickening atrocities by divine command! This is what it has led to sooner or later in the evolution of the religious vagaries of mankind.

The more enlightened men of the age—among them our good chronicler, the Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, for instance ⁴⁶—raised their voices against this crass savagery, and sought to explain the pestilence by the crude science at their disposal. Pope Clement did honour to his humanity and intelligence by striving to stay these horrible outrages, and proclaiming the innocence of the Jews. So did the Emperor Charles IV. and the Duke of Austria, but the popular fury would not be held in check, and sated itself with these wholesale executions in France, Germany, and Italy.

The plague brought, too, social and economic ills

⁴⁶ ii. 214. See also, *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, ii. 342-344, where the good Abbé Li Muisis laments the brutality of these persecutions.

in its train. A murrain wrought as fell havoc among the cattle as had the pestilence among the rural population.⁴⁷ Herds that had been deprived of their owners and shepherds by death were to be seen wandering over the country, carrying the infection of epidemic with them, and perishing in thousands. In one pasture, for instance, as many as five thousand carcasses were to be seen, poisoning the air with an intolerable stench.⁴⁸ The natural result was a scarcity of food and a dearth of labour after the outbreak had spent its force. The land fell out of cultivation for want of tenants and labourers to till it, in spite of the remission of rents by the owners.⁴⁹ Corn as well as cattle, which had been very cheap during the first months of the plague in consequence of the diminution of the population, and the universal panic which disorganised all business,⁵⁰ rose enormously in price. An article that had sold for a penny before the plague was not to be had afterwards for less than fivepence.⁵¹ Famine threatened to continue the mortality.

In this melancholy contingency the English peasant saw the opportunity of bettering his condition, which, owing to the burden of villein services, was wretched enough. If prices rose in consequence of dearth, why should not the price of his labour, especially as he was often paid in base coin, rise in proportion? The number of labourers being thinned to a third or more of what it was before the plague, the landlord must double, or even treble, his starvation pittance, or do without his labour. The law of

⁴⁷ Walsingham, i. 273.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 65.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 65.

⁴⁸ Knighton, ii. 61.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ii. 62.

supply and demand should operate to his advantage, or he would strike and compel his employer to submit to it. Five and a half centuries ago poor Hodge, whose lot was often a hard one, following the teaching of experience, reasoned in accordance with the maxim of modern political economy. If corn sold at a high rate, why should he not have his fair share of the profit? The landlords of the time saw in this insubordination the overweening conceit of rebellious hinds, or the specious pretext of laziness, and made a great outcry. Edward came to the rescue with a proclamation enjoining labour on every able-bodied person under sixty years of age, without a vocation or a competence, and determining the rate of wages to be that of the usual rate (1349). In accordance with this policy of State control, the vendors of victuals were enjoined to sell their commodities at reasonable prices,⁵² and what is still more laudable, these "valiant beggars," who preferred to live on charity instead of by work, must be taught industry by a wholesome compulsion. This regulation proving ineffectual, Parliament in 1351 enacted the Statute of Labourers on the lines of the proclamation, fixing the rate of wages of labourers and artisans, and inhibiting them from moving from one county to another.⁵³

⁵² Statutes at Large, i. 248-251.

⁵³ Rot. Par., ii. 227 and 233-234; Statutes, i. 251-253; Knighton, 63-64. The Commons grounded their petition for legislative action on the fact that the proclamation had been utterly disregarded by the labourers, and the economic situation was becoming daily worse (Rot. Par., ii. 227). The same device of State interference had to be resorted to in France, where the workmen were forbidden to take more than one-third of their former wage (Ordonnances, ii. 377).

CHAPTER XVI.

TRUCE REIGNS, BUT THE WAR CONTINUES (1349-1355).

THE plague afforded the Pope a forcible argument in his renewed appeals on behalf of peace. Was it not the judgment of God on the sins of kings (of Popes too, perhaps?), and was it not their plain duty to bow in contrition before the divine wrath?¹ In deference to his exhortations the truce was prolonged for another year,² and negotiations for peace resumed at Calais.³ The Pope was once more fated to discover that political, not moral, considerations control the diplomacy of this world. "Alas," laments our honest chronicler, "the promise of a lasting peace begotten by this divine visitation, soon vanished, and greater evils than ever burst upon this miserable world."⁴ Bands of brigands—English as well as French—whom the truce had deprived of a vocation, appeared in Gascony, Poitou, Saintonge, Limousin, Brittany, and perpetuated the miseries of war by sweeping suddenly down on a village or a castle and plundering and exacting ransom at will. Among the leaders of these lawless

¹ Knighton, ii. 60, Papa . . . asseverans hæc omnia propter peccata hominibus evenisse.

² *Fœdera*, iii. 166 (6th August 1348) and 177 (13th November).

³ *Ibid.*, iii. 171-173 and 182.

⁴ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 215.

bands, who became the terror of France for many a day, the chronicler signalises one, Bacon, in Limousin, and another, Croquart, in Brittany, who amassed enormous fortunes, and whose services were eagerly competed for by the august monarchs of France and England.⁵ Then came the irruption of Count Louis into Flanders, and an attempt by Philip to recover Calais by strategy, to belie the profession of contrition and amendment. Count Louis, taking advantage of dissensions which had broken out between the men of Ghent and Alost, burst over the frontier at the head of a large French force in the summer of 1348. He was received with acclamation at Alost and Bruges, and, encouraged by the active support of his father-in-law, the Duke of Brabant, punished the opposition of Ypres and Ghent by a strict blockade, which ultimately compelled them to return to their allegiance. Edward, who attempted unsuccessfully to frustrate his progress by sending reinforcements from Calais, had recourse to diplomatic intervention, and despatched Lancaster to Dunkirk to conclude a treaty with the count on the basis of the Anglo-Flemish alliance, and the guarantee of the privileges of the recalcitrant cities.⁶

The attempt to seize Calais was as craftily planned as it was cleverly frustrated. Geoffrey de Charny, Philip's lieutenant in those northern parts, stationed at St Omer, revolved in his enterprising head how he might astonish the world by some dashing feat

⁵ Froissart, v. 224-229; Jean le Bel, ii. 143-145.

⁶ For the articles of the treaty of Dunkirk see *Fœdera*, iii. 178-179, and 189 (10th December 1348 and 26th September 1349). A detailed account of the troubles in Flanders will be found in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, i. 224-226 and ii. 281-288; cf. Baker, pp. 191-194, and Knighton, ii. 60.

of arms. Calais was not far distant, and might not Calais be surprised and taken before Edward could hurry across to the rescue? Might not Amerigo de Pavia, the Lombard mercenary whom Edward had left captain of the castle,⁷ be bought by a handsome bribe to open the gate to a French force? Once in possession of the castle, the town would be at his mercy. Amerigo must be won over, therefore, even if it took twenty thousand gold crowns to buy him, for, being a Lombard, De Chargny had no doubt that he would sell his trust if he only bid high enough. Such was the little plot excogitated by the enterprising lieutenant-general in quest of adventures and renown. He found an easy opportunity of sounding Amerigo, for during the truce there was unrestricted communication between Calais and St Omer. Amerigo consented to turn traitor for the above-mentioned sum—nay, took the Sacrament on it—and Philip had no scruple about furnishing the money for so laudable an object, in spite of truce obligations and peace negotiations. On the last night of 1349 Calais Castle should receive its French garrison.

Meanwhile De Chargny was accumulating reinforcements at St Omer against the preconcerted day. At this stage, Amerigo, who had either been playing a skilful part, or had taken fright at the possible consequences of discovery—the more probable assertion—made a secret journey to London and revealed the intrigue to Edward,⁸ who proved as resourceful as the

⁷ *Fœdera*, iii. 159 (24th April 1348).

⁸ Froissart, in one account (v. 229-232), says that Edward got to know of the plan, and Amerigo went over to supplicate pardon; in another (v. 232-235), that he had merely been leading on De Chargny, and crossed to reveal the conspiracy and concoct mea-

clever commander of St Omer. He bade Amerigo keep on the mask, quietly sent over reinforcements to Calais in small detachments, so as to avoid rousing suspicion, and gave the command of them to his trusty henchman, Walter de Manny. Thereafter he secretly followed himself, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and some of his trustiest captains, and took skilful measures to entrap the unsuspecting French. He caused a false wall, which concealed a number of men-at-arms, to be erected in the courtyard of the castle, and stationed a man in the tower above the drawbridge in charge of a large stone, which he was to drop at a given signal and smash the bridge, after the advance party of the French had passed over.⁹

On the last day of the year 1349, De Chargny quitted St Omer with a large force, and arrived near Calais shortly after midnight. He sent forward messengers to apprise Amerigo, who had hoisted the French flag on the previous day as a sign that all was ready,¹⁰ of his presence. They found him waiting at a postern gate, and returned with the news that the road was clear. De Chargny thereupon ordered Edward de Renti to take the bag containing the twenty thousand crowns,¹¹ and advance with a party of men-at-arms to take possession of the castle, while he himself, leaving a detachment to guard the

suress for its defeat. Avesbury (pp. 408-409) says that he really committed himself for the sake of the bribe, but that Edward was warned betimes; Baker (p. 196) that he revealed the plot in a letter to Edward.

⁹ Baker, pp. 198-199.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197; and Li Muisis, in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, ii. 384.

¹¹ Avesbury says that he had already paid part of the money (p. 409).

bridge of Nieulay, followed and took post near the gate of the town with the remainder. De Renti crept up to the gate and passed across the draw-bridge into the courtyard of the castle, and handed the sack to Amerigo. "Are they all there?" queried he. "Yes, by my faith," answered De Renti. "Wait here a moment, then, till I fetch the keys of the city, for I have them ready for you in the castle." The next moment down crashed the stone on the draw-bridge from the tower above, smashing it in twain, and out burst a posse of men-at-arms from the hall into which Amerigo had disappeared, while others, overturning the false wall constructed to conceal them, rushed on their rear.¹² De Renti and his party were overpowered at once, and clapped up in the castle. "Didst thou think to have the keys of Calais merely for the asking?" sneeringly queried Walter de Manny, as he took the crestfallen Frenchman prisoner.

Meanwhile De Chargny was waiting impatiently for the signal. "What a time that Lombard keeps us standing here. He'll make us die of cold," chafed he, as the minutes slowly passed. "These Lombards are crafty fellows," returned one of his captains reassuringly; "he's counting his crowns to see if they are all there, I'll wager." They continued their anxious watch, and already the faint dawn was beginning to break the darkness. What figures are those moving hurriedly from the gates towards them? "Gentlemen, we are betrayed," cried De Chargny, as he perceived the banner of Walter de Manny. "That Lombard has deceived me. Let us fight, as we must, bravely for our honour and

¹² Baker, p. 199.

our lives." Down came the advancing squadrons ; one issuing from the gate on the land side, led by Edward himself, who fought in the guise of a common knight ; the other from the gate on the side towards Boulogne, led by the Prince of Wales. The French dismounted to receive the charge, the soft ground being unfitted for a cavalry engagement. Many of their opponents followed their example, and a hot combat ensued ; but the French, though superior in numbers, were unable to resist the double attack, and were borne back in confusion. In the ardour of battle, Edward got separated from his division, with but a handful of followers, and was hard put to it to defend himself from the heavy odds arrayed against him. Shouting his battle-cry of " Edward, St George !" to make known his presence to friend and foe alike, he held his ground with valorous obstinacy until he was reinforced by the Prince of Wales, who drove his assailants with severe loss into rout. Among the prisoners was Geoffrey de Chagny himself, besides the greater number of his captains and their men, whose retreat was intercepted by a party of archers, who attacked and seized the bridge of Nieulay, while the battle raged in front.

Edward treated his captives with generous distinction, even feasting them at a banquet in the castle in the evening, at which the Prince of Wales and other English cavaliers served their involuntary guests with their own hands as a mark of respect for their bravery. One of them, Eustace de Ribemont, whom he had taken prisoner in a hard passage of arms, Edward singled out for special honour. Taking a chaplet of pearls from his head, he presented it to

his brave antagonist in a handsome speech. "Mr Eustace," said he, "I give you this chaplet as the best warrior of the day, and I beg you to wear it for the love of me, and seeing you are my prisoner, I give you back your liberty. To-morrow you are free to go where you will."¹³

French intrigue was busy in another direction fomenting hostility to Edward. Throughout the long struggle with France the English monarch had made peristent efforts to secure the alliance of King Alphonso of Castille.¹⁴ These culminated in 1347 in the betrothal of his daughter Joan to Don Pedro, eldest son of the Castilian king. The youthful princess, celebrated for her beauty as well as for her virtues, sailed in the summer of 1348 for her new home,¹⁵ and landed at Bordeaux. Here she fell a victim to the plague, and her betrothed, who came to meet her, had the melancholy experience of celebrating a funeral instead of a marriage. The grief of her attendants was so great that some of them died of the shock.¹⁶ The relations between the two Courts appear to have become strained after this event. There was ample matter of quarrel in the disputes of their subjects, who seized and plundered each other's ships off the coasts of Gascony and Castille.¹⁷ The arbiters appointed to settle

¹³ Froissart, v. 235-251; Avesbury, pp. 408-410; Baker, pp. 196-201; Li Muisis in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriæ*, ii. 382-385. Amerigo paid dearly for his falsity, for being afterwards taken prisoner by the French in the castle of Frithun, near Calais, his tongue was cut out, and he was then hanged, decapitated, and quartered (Froissart, v. 271-274).

¹⁴ See *Fœdera*, iii., for this frequent correspondence.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 147-156.

¹⁶ Baker, p. 187.

¹⁷ See, for instance, *Fœdera*, iii. 156; Avesbury, p. 412.

these disputes failed to assuage the resentments of either side. The Castilians became more daring and insolent in their attacks on English shipping, their aim being nothing less than to cripple the maritime power of England, and dominate the English Channel. Nay, they threatened to invade England itself, and indulged in the tall talk as natural to the proud Spaniard as to the haughty Englishman.¹⁸ Edward was deeply incensed, and determined to teach these presumptuous Castilians a lesson. In the summer of 1350, a large Castilian fleet, under Don Carlos de la Cerda, which passed up the Channel, had captured a number of richly laden English wine vessels, and slaughtered their crews. Its destination was Sluys, where it shipped cargoes of Flemish cloth and other merchandise. Edward collected a fleet at Sandwich against its return, and kept a large force in readiness to embark.¹⁹ The Spaniards on their part increased their numbers by hiring mercenaries from the Low Countries, and the fighting power of their ships by strengthening their artillery. Towards the end of August, Edward put to sea in expectation of their approach. With him were his two sons, the Prince of Wales and John of Ghent, then a boy of ten, and many of the most famous English warriors of the age, such as the Earls of Lancaster, Northampton, Salisbury, Arundel, Huntingdon, Gloucester, Hereford, Suffolk, Warwick, Reginald de Cobham, Walter de Manny, Thomas de Holland, Louis de Beauchamp, and Lords Percy, Mowbray, and Neville. On the 29th August, the English fleet was cruising off Winchelsea, on the look-out for the Spaniards. Edward, clad in a black velvet jacket,

¹⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 201.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, iii. 193-195.

with a black beaver cap on his head, sat in right merry mood on the deck of his vessel, listening to the lays of his minstrels, who played on the horn a German dance, which John of Chandos had taught them, and which the gallant cavalier warbled to their accompaniment. This merry scene was presently interrupted by the shout of the look-out man perched aloft on the foremast. "Ho!" called he; "I see a ship, and it looks like a Spaniard." Instantly the minstrels ceased their music. "I see two, three, four," called the watch again, "and ever so many more that, God help me, I cannot count them." In a short time the hulls of the great Spanish vessels, forty-four in number, loomed distinct against the eastern horizon, the huge sails spread out by a fair and strong wind. Thereupon Edward ranged his fleet in battle order, right across their track, and he and his captains, after refreshing themselves with wine and meat, donned their armour in readiness for the fray. It was late in the afternoon before the Spanish fleet came up, bowling along before the east wind straight for the English vessels, its captains in high confidence of victory, for in size and armament, if not in number, they were greatly superior to their adversaries. Singling out the leading vessel—one of the most formidable—Edward bade his captain lay him alongside. Down came the mighty ship, its great bows towering, high and menacing, above those of its antagonist. Anon there was a loud crash as the vessels closed, Edward's ship reeling under the blow, and springing a leak, while the mast of the Spaniard crashed overboard into the sea, carrying with it the men stationed in its "castle." The great vessel sheered off before Edward's sailors

could make it fast with their grappling irons. They were more successful in their efforts to close with its successor, and the battle opened in deadly earnest on both sides. In a few minutes the two fleets were interlocked in grim embrace, ship to ship, the English fighting under great disadvantage owing to the disparity in the size of their vessels. The Spaniards showered down on the English decks great stones and bars of iron from the "castles" of their masts, and did such damage that some of the English ships were ere long in a sinking condition, while their cross-bowmen galled their crews with showers of arrows. The fell aim and longer range of the English archers, which compelled the Spanish artillerymen as well as the cross-bowmen to shelter themselves behind the bulwarks and castles, and thus checked the discharge of missiles, once more stood Edward in good stead, and the desperate fury with which his sailors and men-at-arms attacked their assailants in hand-to-hand combat ere long proved irresistible. In spite of a most stubborn resistance, they fought their way on the decks of the leading Spanish ships, putting every soul to the sword, or pressing them overboard, for quarter there was none. A terrible butchery was the result, English chivalry being unfortunately in no chivalrous mood in this vindictive encounter. Edward having overpowered his antagonist, and cleared it of its occupants in this savage fashion, abandoned his own ship in a sinking condition, and turned the huge vessel against others of the enemy, fighting now on fair terms, and with still more deadly effect. Meanwhile the Prince of Wales was hard put to it, here as at Crecy, in the struggle with his assailant. His ship, riddled by a discharge

of heavy missiles, was on the point of sinking, and every effort to board the Spaniard was in vain. Seeing the peril in which he was placed, the Earl of Lancaster fought his way up to the offside of the huge Spanish galleon, and clambered on board with the cry, "Derby to the rescue!" Unable to sustain this double attack, resistance soon ceased, but only just in time, for no sooner was the prince on board than his ship was engulfed in the waves. An exciting incident then supervened. The "*Salle du Roi*," commanded by Robert de Namur, was engaged in hot combat with a large Spaniard, when the captain made full sail, and sped off, dragging the English vessel along. The interlocked ships passed near Edward, who called out, "Rescue the '*Salle du Roi*.'" In the noise of battle the order was unheard, and the Spaniard got clear away in the gathering darkness. Thereupon one of Lord Robert's servants, named Hanekin, sprang on board the Spaniard, and mounting the rigging, cut the ropes that held fast the sail. Down flapped the canvas, and the vessel came to a standstill. It was a daring deed, in keeping with the wild, reckless *bravour* of the age, and it was effectual, for Lord Robert and his men, clambering over the bulwarks, cut down the crew, and returned with their prize amid the cheers of the English fleet. Before night closed, and the triumphant trumpet-blast from the English ships announced that the battle was over, seventeen great ships had been captured; the rest escaped in the darkness.

Edward remained till morning on the scene of the action in the hope of renewing the battle, but at daybreak the residue of the Spanish fleet, which

had crowded sail in headlong flight throughout the night, was nowhere to be seen. He then made sail for Winchelsea, to announce to the queen and the vast crowd of country people who had been anxiously watching the conflict from the hill-tops, the tidings of his victory.²⁰ A year later (1st August 1351) a truce for twenty years was concluded between Edward, on behalf of the maritime towns of the county of Biscay, and the representatives of those of Castille.²¹

A week before the battle, Philip VI. vanished from the realm of history into Purgatory, if not Hades, as his antagonist doubtless believed. He had done little to vindicate his title to the throne in the way of beneficent, practical statesmanship. In the matter of extortion, corruption, arbitrary oppression, France was in far worse plight than England. England had had to pay for victory, France for defeat. Jacques Bonhomme had all, nay, more than all the grievances of John Bull to exasperate him, with the comforting reflection to boot, that he had been thrashed and pillaged beyond measure in spite of his patriotic efforts and endurance. The *élite* of French chivalry had been slain or captured, the masses had been led like sheep to the slaughter in a quarrel which concerned two individuals merely, and all in vain. Following the war had come the pestilence, from which France had suffered equally with England, and when Philip, who, at the age of fifty-eight, had for the second time become the husband of a girl of eighteen, Blanche de Navarre,

²⁰ Froissart, v. 257-271; Baker, pp. 202-206; Avesbury, p. 412; Walsingham, i. 274-275; Corpus Chron. Fl., ii. 400-402.

²¹ Foedera, iii. 228.

but eight months before, sank exhausted into the grave, there were no tears shed by the nation which he had governed so miserably for twenty-two years. Philip had shown that he too could win a battle—that of Cassel—but the promise of martial capacity, so indispensable in a king in this fighting age, was belied by the sequel. As against an Edward, Philip was only a second-rate general, while in energy and power of inciting enthusiasm he was greatly his inferior. He was a respectable figurehead of the State in things ceremonial, fond of courtly pomp, fond, too, of the parade of chivalry, and in this respect might take up the gauntlet against any mediocre king of them all. In ceremonials, manners, amusements, *savoir vivre*, his Court gave the cue to Europe, as in later times, and brought some compensation to French vanity for the expensive luxury of paying for a hereditary master, whom neither God nor nature had otherwise fitted to be a king. Since tradition governs the world so largely, France bore the infliction for twenty-two years, nay, paid for the privilege of hereditary misgovernment in the shape of the *gabelle*, or salt-tax, the wretched financial experiments for filling the treasury connected with the depreciation of the coinage, the tax on provisions, and so forth.

Even Philip, however, may be allowed the merit of doing some meritorious things. He acquired Dauphiné and Montpellier for France; he stood by David of Scotland in chivalrous fashion when he might have sold him to his adversary for a high price; he stood up manfully for French independence against a claimant who would have subjected France to a foreign jurisdiction; he was a skilful

antagonist in the game of political checkmate, if not in the field. But the memory of these good deeds has been clouded by the misfortunes and miseries of his reign, and the chroniclers have little to say to his credit in contrast with his great rival, "the noble King Edward," and much to his detraction. But then Froissart, Jean le Bel, and the rest of them, who are dazzled by the glory of military prestige, did not hear John Bull growling and cursing at his own fireside.

With his last breath he exhorted his son John, Duke of Normandy, to maintain his rights against the arch-enemy, while avoiding war, if he could possibly retain peaceable possession of the kingdom.²² It was indeed a dreary outlook for France, if hostilities should be resumed under such a sovereign. John was a second edition of Philip, in his love of pomp and pleasure, not without courage and emulation of knightly fame (as personified by his model, John of Bohemia), but with still less capacity for administration and generalship, and without a vestige of a conception of sane government. What the English invader had left unscathed, the king and his courtiers pillaged, by an army of corrupt officials, who carried out the oppressive devices of a mad financial policy. With such a king on the throne, the renewal of war could only lead to crushing disaster, and John unhappily was as eager for martial distinction as he was unfitted to attain it.

Here was a grand chance of amendment on both sides. The Pope made a supreme effort, and entreated Edward to put an end to the discord of Christendom, and come to terms with King John.²³

²² Baker, p. 206; cf. G. de Nangis, ii. 222. ²³ *Fœdera*, iii. 202.

Edward was so far amenable to the papal exhortations as to confirm the truce of Calais, and resume negotiations for a final peace.²⁴ But so long as he refused to recognise John's title to the French crown, and persisted in referring to him as "John, son of Philip of Valois," negotiation must continue to be the farce it had been these twenty years past. The provocation to a renewal of the strife came from King John, however, eager for glory and the reconquest of lost territory. Edward was informed that he contemplated nothing less than an invasion of England itself, and the report furnished him with a pretext for making a patriotic appeal to the liberality of the clergy.²⁵ John was certainly bent on prosecuting the war in Guienne, at least, and Edward's apprehensions were partly confirmed by the news that the French had suddenly invested St Jean d'Angely, and were starving out the garrison. In response to an urgent appeal for help, Edward despatched John de Beauchamp to Bordeaux, with a small force of archers and men-at-arms, to relieve it. At Bordeaux he was joined by several thousand Gascons, and immediately set out northwards with a large convoy of provisions for the beleaguered garrison. At Saintes he found the bridge across the Charente in possession of a French force commanded by Guy de Nesle.²⁶ To force the passage was hopeless, and John de Beauchamp decided to retreat. "My lords of England," cried De Nesle, "you shall not retire without paying

²⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 207 (2nd November 1350).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 214 (March 1351).

²⁶ Froissart says near Taillebourg. Martin (*Hist. de France*, v. 124) is wrong in placing the battle of Saintes in August 1351. It was fought either on the 8th April, according to Avesbury or the 1st April, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*.

your scot," and sprang after them in pursuit. This bravado cost him dear, for De Beauchamp, perceiving with delight that the enemy had given themselves away, halted, wheeled his columns, and charged. The French opened their ranks, and the English horsemen galloped right through. Then wheeling, they returned to the charge, and engaged in fierce and obstinate combat. The desperate courage of the French availed not to save them from crushing defeat, though it prolonged the struggle, and cost the Anglo-Gascons severe loss. Guy de Nesle, Arnoul d'Audrehem, and most of their fellow-cavaliers who escaped death, were made prisoners, but the victors were too weak to push on to the relief of St Jean, and returned to Bordeaux. The garrison, though left to its fate, nevertheless held out for several months, and only capitulated to King John in person, by force of starvation, in the beginning of September.²⁷

As a set-off to this exploit, Edward could vaunt the capture of the castle of Guisnes, in the neighbourhood of Calais, in the following January (1352). The hero of this exploit was John de Dancaster, who had escaped from his captivity in the fortress by the connivance of a wench with whom he had an intrigue. This woman showed him a submerged wall that crossed the moat about two feet below the surface, and thus enabled him to give his captors the slip. Dancaster accordingly stole up one winter night to the ditch, with eighty soldiers from Calais, waded across, scaled the walls, put to death the watch, and killed or captured the whole garrison. Though this

²⁷ Froissart, v. 278-288, who erroneously says that the garrison only held out for fifteen days; Avesbury, p. 413.

enterprise was undertaken without Edward's knowledge, he willingly paid the captors a large sum for their prize, which possessed great strategic importance.²⁸

A much greater triumph was won by Sir Walter Bentley, Edward's lieutenant in Brittany, some months later. The war between the rival claimants to the duchy had continued intermittently after the capture of Charles of Blois.²⁹ Among other exploits, the chronicler signalises one of those knightly encounters, which were more tests of personal prowess than decisive feats of arms. Thirty Breton and French cavaliers, of the party of Charles of Blois, challenged as many English, German, and Breton knights of the opposite side to mortal combat for the love of their ladies fair. The scene of the encounter, much celebrated in minstrel story, was a spot between the castle of Josselin and that of Ploërmel. Beaumanoir, a Breton lord of ancient lineage, was the captain of the partisans of Blois, and Bramborough, guardian of Ploërmel, of those of Montfort. After hearing Mass on the morning of the 27th March 1351, the warriors betook themselves to the rendezvous, and dismounted. A herald first interdicted their followers or friends from mingling in the fray, under any pretext whatsoever. Then courteously greeting each other, they retired a step or two, and the signal being given, joined in hand-to-hand combat. Presently one of the Bretons was killed, but there was no respite in the brutal performance till they fell asunder from sheer exhaustion, each to quaff a goblet

²⁸ Avesbury, pp. 414-415; Baker, pp. 213-217; Froissart, v. 306-307.

²⁹ Froissart, v. 289.

of wine and rest for a little. At this stage, four of the partisans of Blois, and two of Montfort, lay dead on the sward. The signal being again given, they closed for the second time, and the blows waxed ever more furious as they warmed to their bloody work, until Beaumanoir, exhausted, again called a halt. "Cease," cried he, "that I may quench my thirst." The response of Geoffrey de Boves was brutal enough:—

"Bois ton sang, Beaumanoir,
Ta soif se passera."

Ever fiercer waxed the fray, and the issue was still doubtful, when William de Montauban, feigning flight, mounted his horse, and dashing back into the Anglo-Breton ranks, bore down several of his antagonists, and threw the rest into confusion. This unknighly device decided the issue in favour of Blois' partisans, Bramborough and eight of his knights being killed, and all the combatants more or less severely wounded.³⁰

King John warmly espoused the cause of his captive kinsman, and sent a large army, under Marshal Bertram, to enforce his claim. Sir W. Bentley went over to England to solicit reinforcements in person, and on his return marched against Bertram. The two armies met at Mauron, on the 10th of August 1352, between Rennes and Ploërmel. The French were posted at the foot of a hill, and were besides greatly superior in number. Sure of an easy triumph, the French marshal chivalrously sent a herald to counsel his antagonist not to offer battle

³⁰ Froissart, v. 289-295.

on such disadvantageous terms. The high-spirited Bentley scorned the advice, and the battle began. There was on this occasion no advantage of position on the side of the English to make up for disparity of numbers, the country being open, "without woods, ditches, or other defences," and Bentley gained a decisive victory by sheer generalship and valour. The French lost 140 knights, many of them belonging to the newly founded Order of the Star (l'Etoile)—the French counterpart of the Garter—and 500 esquires, and a correspondingly large number of foot soldiers, while the prisoners embraced 160 knights and esquires.³¹ Bentley was severely wounded, and so angry was he at the cowardice displayed by some of his archers that he had them beheaded on the field.

Shortly after the Bishop of Vannes and the Lord Beaumanoir were sent to England to negotiate the release of Charles of Blois.³² The Pope added his intercession, and at length Edward consented to release him on condition of the payment of a ransom of forty thousand florins, and the marriage of his eldest son to his daughter Margaret. He was permitted to go to Brittany to raise this sum, but the massacre of the English garrison of an island off the Breton coast, in which Charles was accused of connivance, frustrated this arrangement. He returned to captivity, and it was not till July 1357 that he was finally released.³³

The truce had meanwhile been prolonged at in-

³¹ Avesbury, pp. 415-417, who gives Bentley's letter descriptive of the action; Baker, pp. 218-219.

³² *Fœdera*, iii. 250 (December 1352).

³³ *Ibid.*, iii. 360; cf. iii. 382.

tervals,³⁴ in spite of this state of chronic warfare. The country had, as we have seen, lost all patience with Edward's foreign policy, and would have welcomed peace almost at any price, short of national humiliation. There would have been no sacrifice in so doing, for England was sated with barren victories which cost so much and brought so little in return, and would gladly have consigned Edward's claim to the French crown to the study of crown lawyers and royal pedigree makers, if the diplomatists had agreed to leave it alone and permanently settle other matters in dispute. In these circumstances, Edward at last resolved to proffer what he considered reasonable terms of peace. In March 1354 he sent an embassy, headed by the Bishop of Norwich,* to Calais, to inform John's representatives of his willingness to renounce his claim to the crown of France, on condition that John should recognise his independent sovereignty over his French possessions.³⁵ To this proposition the French commissioners, through the mediation of Cardinal Guy of Bologna, provisionally agreed, and the final adjustment of other disputed questions was to be made before the Pope. Clement, who died in December 1352,³⁶ no longer occupied the papal chair, and Edward probably expected a more impartial hearing from his successor, Innocent VI., formerly Bishop of Clermont and Cardinal d'Ostea. The new Pope was, of course, a Frenchman (Etienne Aubert), but as Edward had yielded the main point of contention,

³⁴ See, for instance, *Fœdera*, iii. 253 (February 1353), 260 (July), 262 (July), 268 (November).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 275; cf. *Avesbury*, pp. 420-421; *Rot. Par.*, ii. 251-252.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, iii. 259.

he might reasonably expect that Innocent would give judgment in his favour in regard to territorial disputes. He laid this provisional agreement before Parliament, which met in the end of April, and only too gladly gave its unanimous assent.³⁷ A new embassy, consisting of the Bishops of Norwich and London, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Arundel, and B. de Burghersh, accordingly set out in August for Avignon, where there was much feasting and wine-bibbing by the Pope and the cardinals in their honour,³⁸ with full powers from king and Parliament to accept the papal arbitration.³⁹ There was no lack of goodwill in the business of negotiation on the English side, but this goodwill was unfortunately not shared by John and his advisers. Negotiations had not proceeded far before the English plenipotentiaries discovered that they had come on a fool's errand. John's ambassadors, the Duke of Bourbon and the Archbishop of Rouen, refused to consent to any agreement based on the preliminaries of Calais, and demanded that Edward should erase the arms of France from his escutcheon and do homage to John for Gascony.⁴⁰

Edward's patience was now exhausted, and though he continued to observe the truce, which had been again prorogued until June 1355, he prepared for war in earnest. He told the envoys of the Pope, who made a vain effort to resume negotiations,⁴¹ that he had exhausted every effort of diplomacy to bring about a lasting peace, and that his adversary

³⁷ Rot. Par., ii. 262.

³⁸ Knighton, ii. 79.

³⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 283-284.

⁴⁰ Avesbury, p. 421; cf. Froissart, v. 312; Knighton, ii. 77-79. The negotiations were prolonged throughout January and February 1355.

⁴¹ *Fœdera*, iii. 297.

had broken faith so often, and by his intrigues and his aggressions had heaped injury upon injury, that forbearance could stand it no longer. He would take the advice of his council on the matter, and intimate his decision to the Pope in due time.⁴² What that decision would be was no longer doubtful, and with this angry response the envoys were fain to return after a few days' sojourn. Both sides exerted themselves in preparation for the inevitable conflict. As on former occasions, Edward laid his quarrel before the nation in letters to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishops, in which he repeated the story of his grievances, and solicited⁴³ their prayers and processions for his success. As before, too, the pulpits were made the vehicles of the modern newspaper propaganda, and resounded with patriotic sermons for the enlightenment of the people.

At this juncture, John, unhappily for himself and France, goaded some of his most powerful subjects into sedition by his tyrannic and maladroit measures. With detestable treachery, he sent the constable, the Count of Eu, who returned to France, in November 1350, to negotiate the payment of his ransom, to the scaffold without the benefit of a trial,⁴⁴ and conferred his office and part of his lands on his favourite Charles de la Cerda. John did not deign to state the grounds of this cruel deed to the nation. There seems to have been no charge against the murdered man, beyond a suspicion that he had undertaken to deliver the castle and county of Guisnes to Edward,⁴⁵

⁴² Avesbury, pp. 423-424.

⁴³ *Fœdera*, iii. 303 (June 1355).

⁴⁴ Avesbury, pp. 413-414.

⁴⁵ Villani is the only authority for this story. Knighton, ii. 76, ascribes his death to his encomiums of Edward.

in lieu of the money ransom which he was unable to raise. If there had been any truth in this suspicion, John would surely have made haste to reveal it in self-defence against the murmurs of the nobility. The infamous relations between the weak monarch and the greedy favourite (if some of the chroniclers speak truly), suggest other reasons, which better explain this ominous silence. Still worse, from the political point of view, John had the imprudence to rouse the enmity of the young King Charles of Navarre—Charles le Mauvais of future notoriety—and husband of his daughter Jeanne, by his insensate partiality for the favourite. He loaded him with honours and estates; among them the county of Angouleme, which belonged to the King of Navarre. Henceforth there was bitter feud between the constable and Navarre, who became the leader of the malcontent nobility. John's folly in alienating so powerful a vassal, and driving him into the arms of Edward, verges on sheer madness. Besides his influence as King of Navarre, he had all the prestige of a deprived claimant to the crown of France itself, as the grandson of Louis X. He had waived his claim in deference to the decision that made Philip of Valois king, but if he could not wear the crown of France, he was determined to have the head of Charles de la Cerda. On the 8th January 1354, a band of assassins burst into the castle of Laigle in Normandy, and murdered the constable in his bed, in spite of his piteous appeals for mercy.⁴⁶ Navarre was waiting outside the town with a

⁴⁶ Froissart, v. 309-310; *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 25-28; *Cont. de G. de Nangis*, ii. 227-228; *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 7-8.

number of seigneurs, when in the early dawn a horseman came galloping towards him with the cry, "It is done, he is dead." He avowed responsibility for the deed, in spite of the fury of King John, and prepared to defend himself against his resentment. After the first paroxysm of anger, John thought better of it, and listening to the entreaties of his council, consented to a reconciliation, with compensation to boot for the county of Angouleme, rather than risk a civil war. The prearranged ceremony took place at Paris, on the 4th March. John was merely dissembling, however, until he could lay hands on his rebellious son-in-law, while the suspicions of the son-in-law drove him into treasonable intrigues with Edward. Civil war again threatened, and Navarre had actually landed at Cherbourg with a Navarrese army to co-operate with the Duke of Lancaster, but once more John drew back at the prospect of a conflict with two rival claimants at the same time, and agreed to the treaty of Valognes (10th September 1355⁴⁷).

Edward had meanwhile been endeavouring to take advantage of this lucky imbroglio. He had sent Lancaster to negotiate an alliance with Navarre,⁴⁸ and in the summer of 1355, no less than three expeditions were planned against France. One, consisting of forty large ships, under the Duke of Lancaster, was got ready in the Thames in July. Its destination was Normandy, and its object was to assist the King of Navarre in his quarrel with John. Edward himself embarked with the inten-

⁴⁷ See Secousse *Preuves de l'Histoire de Charles le Mauvais*, pp. 582-595.

⁴⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 271 (January 1354).

tion of effecting a junction with Navarre in Jersey, and invading Normandy with a combined Anglo-Navarrese force. Contrary winds kept the fleet beating about in the Channel, and at last forced it to seek refuge at Portsmouth. Here he learned that King Charles had made his peace with John, and the expedition was in consequence abandoned.⁴⁹ A far more formidable fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 8th September, under the Prince of Wales, then in his twenty-fourth year, to Gascony. It numbered about three hundred vessels, and carried a large force of men-at-arms, archers, and Welshmen, commanded by such famous captains as the Earls of Warwick, Suffolk, Salisbury, and Oxford. It started with a fair wind, and scudded across the Bay of Biscay to Bordeaux in a few days. The destination of the third was Calais, whence Edward himself purposed to invade northern France, while his son made an attack on the south.⁵⁰

Edward left Sandwich about the end of October, accompanied by his son Lionel, Duke of Ulster, John of Ghent, Earl of Richmond, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earls of Northampton, March, Stafford, Lords Neville and Percy, Sir Walter de Manny, and other gallant cavaliers. At Calais he was reinforced by a thousand Flemish, Brabant, and German mercenaries, and his army, in which was a regiment of five hundred archers raised by the city of London, was one of the finest, if not the strongest, with which he had taken the field in person. It was greatly inferior in numbers, how-

⁴⁹ See Sir Walter de Manny's speech to Parliament in November 1355 (*Rot. Par.*, ii. 264).

⁵⁰ *Avesbury*, pp. 424-427; *Rot. Par.*, ii. 264.

ever, to that which John,⁵¹ who had got information of Edward's intention, and had marched northward after the abandonment of the expedition against Normandy, had gathered under his banner. But Edward had learned to confide in a picked English force as against greatly superior numbers, and on the 2nd November moved boldly forward into Artois, devastating the country as he went,⁵² almost up to Amiens.⁵³ Here the lack of supplies began to tell on the ardour of his men, who had little to eat (the French advance guard having burned the country to impede their progress), and nothing to drink but water for four days, and necessitated retreat.⁵⁴ The approach of King John at the head of a fresh and well-equipped army was a no less potent argument in favour of relinquishing the hope of fighting a pitched battle. He accordingly retraced his steps by way of Boulogne, in order to refresh his famishing men, and re-entered Calais, with some plunder, if with no laurels, on the 11th November, only nine days after he had set out. On the morrow there arrived the Constable of France to offer battle in the name of his sovereign, who had followed the retreating English northwards. Nothing came of the proposal, in spite of lengthy discussions, the English chronicler, of course, laying the blame for the lame, unchivalrous conclusion of

⁵¹ John had issued an ordinance in May summoning all the fencible men of the kingdom between eighteen and sixty.

⁵² Rot. Par., ii. 264.

⁵³ Avesbury is incorrect in saying that John retreated from St Omer before his advance, laying waste the country. His itinerary, on the other hand, as given by Luce (Froissart, iv. 65), shows a gradual advance.

⁵⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 264.

all this martial effort on John. However this may be, Edward had too pressing work on hand elsewhere to waste further time on such knightly palaver, or to covet the honour of fighting a pitched battle. At Calais the startling news reached him that the Scots were up in arms in aid of his adversary of France, and while he was wasting his strength in the aimless endeavour to bring John to blows in Artois, had captured Berwick.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Avesbury, pp. 427-431; Froissart, v. 313-331, whose account is more flattering to John. He makes him pursue Edward as far as Sandgatte, and Edward refuse the offer of battle after hearing of the fall of Berwick.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDWARD IN SCOTLAND AND THE BLACK PRINCE IN LANGUEDOC (1355-1356).

SCOTLAND had given Edward little trouble since the defeat of Neville's Cross. The main fact in the Anglo-Scottish relations of these years is the long negotiation for the ransom and liberation of the captive Scottish king. Embassy after embassy went to London to arrange terms,¹ but Edward was in no hurry to divest himself of so important a prisoner, who was a trump card to play against the indomitable Scots. Nor was David, it must be confessed, very impatient of a captivity which, though not very honourable, was very pleasant, at a Court where love and amusement exercised a welcome fascination. He was allowed to pay a visit to Scotland in the beginning of 1352,² after leaving seven hostages chosen from the sons of the higher nobility as pledges of his return, in order to persuade the Scots to accept Edward's terms. These amounted to nothing less than the recognition of Edward's supremacy over Scotland, and David so far yielded to the influences of his surroundings as to forget that he was the son of Robert Bruce, and sign away the independence of

¹ *Foedera*, iii. 167, *et seq.*; cf. *Rot. Scot.*, i. 723; Baker, p. 186.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 231, *et seq.*; cf. Knighton, ii. 69.

his country.³ The spirit of the Scots rose against the proposal. They stoutly answered that though they were eager to ransom their king, they would on no account bend in subjection to the monarch of England.⁴ The Knight of Liddesdale was not made of such stern stuff, and, unfortunately for his patriotism, consented to buy his liberty, and at the same time sell his honour, by binding himself to serve Edward.⁵ He obtained in return a grant of Liddesdale. His treason, and the good fortune which was the reward of it, were visited with terrible punishment by his kinsman, Lord W. Douglas, whose fierce patriotism combined with his jealousy of Liddesdale's relations with his wife to exact a savage revenge. As he was hunting in Ettrick Forest, he was attacked and slain by Lord William at a lonely spot.⁶ It was a foul deed, yet the shades of Alexander Ramsay and other victims of Liddesdale's treacherous violence might gloat over the gruesome spectacle as an expiation of deeds equally foul.

Lord William continued the crusade against the English, driving them out of Galloway as he had driven them out of Teviotdale, and compelling the inhabitants to swear fealty to their lawful sovereign.⁷ Another patriot of the same stamp, Roger

³ See Ayloffe's *Calendars of Ancient Charters*, p. 299 (20th March 1351 and 12th April 1352).

⁴ Knighton, ii. 69, *Scoti vero unanimi assensu sub una voce responderunt se velle regem suum redimere, set se subdere regi Angliæ nequaquam velle*; cf. *ibid.*, ii. 75, and *Rot. Scot.*, i. 752-753, where the Scots repeat their determination in 1553. They would rather choose another king than consent to redeem David on such terms.

⁵ *Fœdera*, iii. 246-247.

⁶ *Fordun*, i. 370.

⁷ *Wyntoun*, ii. 487.

Kirkpatrick, reduced the castles of Caerlaverock and Dalswinton, and swept them out of Nithsdale,⁸ while the Earl of Carrick cleared Annandale.⁹ In spite of the pusillanimity of King David, Scottish patriotism was as pugnacious as ever, and its leaders were in this resentful, obstreperous mood when the emissaries of King John, in expectation of a rupture with Edward, arrived in 1355 to renew the Franco-Scottish alliance, and concoct a Scottish invasion of England. They brought with them what could not fail to prove an irresistible argument in a poor country,—a supply of French gold. The sum offered amounted to 40,000 moutons, each of the value of four shillings, or £8,000, a trifling sum according to the modern standard, but representing little short of £300,000 relatively. This would go a long way in these needy times, and Eugene de Garencières, the leader of the embassy, who brought with him sixty French cavaliers,¹⁰ had no difficulty in persuading the Scottish chiefs to venture a rupture with Edward on his master's behalf. It was a poor bargain, for the Scots, sorrowfully remarks the patriotic chronicler, "often for a penny lose a shilling," and the pillage of southern Scotland was to pay for this hasty espousal of John's quarrel.¹¹ A Scottish army crossed the Tweed at Norham in August, led by William Douglas, William Ramsay, and the Earl of March. The advance guard, under Ramsay, plundered the village of Norham and surrounding district. While retiring with its booty, the garrison, under Sir Thomas

⁸ Wyntoun, ii. 487.

⁹ Ibid., ii. 248.

¹⁰ Knighton erroneously says eight hundred (ii. 79).

¹¹ Fordun, i. 371.

Gray, sallied out to intercept it. Ramsay held his ground for a while, and then feigning flight, drew the English after him to Nesbit. Here, screened by the spur of a hill, Douglas lay concealed with the main body and the French under Garençières. On hurried the English up the steep incline on the heels of the fugitives. On the summit they beheld with astonishment the banner of Douglas and his Scots and Frenchmen. "Let us fight like men," cried Sir Thomas, in the chivalrous spirit of the time; "to flee is disgrace." He had hardly time to dub his son, William, knight, before the enemy was upon them. In the fierce combat that followed they were completely worsted, Sir Thomas and a large number of his cavaliers being taken prisoner. Only a few of their followers escaped death or capture, while the Scots lost John of Haliburton and James Turnbull, both famous in border warfare.¹²

This exploit was followed in the beginning of November by a still greater feat, the hero of which was Thomas Stewart, Earl of Angus. Collecting a small fleet from the seaports of the east coast, he crept one night unnoticed into the mouth of the Tweed at Berwick. Quietly slipping his men ashore, he stole up in the darkness to the walls with his scaling ladders. Waiting till the first streak of dawn, his men mounted the ramparts, killed the watch, and burst into the town before the citizens or the garrison were aware of their presence. Panic seized the townsmen, many of whom rushed away, leaving the Scots to plunder to their heart's content. The garrison, however, repelled an attack on the

¹² Fordun, i. 371-372; Wyntoun, ii. 485-487; Knighton, ii. 81; Scalachronica, p. 304.

castle, and held out with determined valour, while messengers were speeding southwards to Calais to apprise Edward of the disaster.¹³ Berwick was the Calais of the north, and must be recaptured at all hazards. Edward, therefore, hurried back to London to meet Parliament, which he had summoned, before his departure, for the 25th November. Sir Walter de Manny gave an account of the futile negotiations at Avignon, and the abortive expedition from Calais. The chief justice, Sir W. Shreshull, followed with an appeal for a grant to enable the king to chastise the presumptuous Scots and pursue his quarrel with France. The Franco-Scottish coalition was too serious a menace to England to admit of long debate, and after a short conference between Lords and Commons, they unanimously granted the subsidy on wool, wool-fells, and leather, for the next six years.¹⁴ As the number of sacks annually exported amounted to 100,000, at 50s. customs each, the annual sum placed at Edward's disposal for six years to come, reached the enormous total of £250,000, in all £1,500,000. This, multiplied by say 20, represents in modern money £30,000,000!¹⁵

Thus amply provided with the sinews of war, present and prospective, Edward got in readiness a large fleet and army¹⁶ for the recapture of the town and the relief of the castle of Berwick. The news of his approach from Newcastle at the head of 80,000 men, and the appearance of the fleet in the river, sufficed to dispose the small Scottish garrison of 130 men, which the Steward had left to hold the

¹³ Fordun, i. 372; Wyntoun, ii. 483-484; Knighton, ii. 84; Froissart, v. 323-324.

¹⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 264-265.

¹⁵ See Avesbury, p. 431.

¹⁶ Foedera, iii. 314; Rot. Scot., i. 782-783, *et seq.*

town, to capitulate. Sir Walter de Manny had prepared the way for a successful attack, on Edward's arrival, by digging a mine under the walls on the side next the castle, and on the morning of the 4th of January 1356, Edward ordered an assault by sea and land. Resistance being hopeless, the Scots demanded a parley, and sent a deputation to deliver up the keys on condition of being allowed to march away unmolested. With more generosity than he had shown at Calais, the English monarch chivalrously let his prey escape in this facile fashion. But he was none the less determined to avenge the outrage and paralyse the aggressive power of Scotland as the tool of French hostility, if the Scots should refuse to own themselves his rebel vassals, and make amends accordingly. He proceeded to Roxburgh, and here a melodramatic scene flattered at the outset his vanity, and promised the realisation of his ambition. To Roxburgh, on the 20th of January, came the craven Baliol to make formal renunciation of his right to the Scottish crown in his favour. "These I give you," said Baliol, handing him his crown and some pebbles which he picked up from the ground, "that you may avenge me of these false Scots, my enemies, who have cast me aside. Conquer them, and possess the land which should have been mine."¹⁷ In return for the renunciation of a kingdom which he had never possessed, though he boasted the title of conqueror in reminiscence of the battle of Dupplin, Baliol received an annuity of £2,000, and closed his inglorious career in 1363.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Fœdera*, iii. 318, *et seq.*, and *Rot. Scot.*, i. 787; cf. *Avesbury*, pp. 451-454, and *Knighton*, ii. 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 319.

It was one thing to filch the crown of Scotland from a sorry pretender, who had lived for a quarter of a century on Edward's bounty; it was another thing to coerce a high-spirited people which had asserted and preserved its independence against the might of England. Edward, however, had confidence in the power of the sword to overawe national sentiment, and prepared to set forward on his march at the head of a splendidly equipped army of thirty-three thousand men, three thousand of whom were mailed troopers, with the banner of Scotland unfurled by the side of that of England. He was speedily to discover that the dour Scot was a bad subject for an ambitious despot to tamper with. He might as well have tried to level the Grampians as dictate to these fierce patriots, in whom the spirit of national tradition was stronger than in any people of Europe. Let us be thankful that in an age when brutal force is the chief factor in politics, moral force, in the shape of national tradition at least, counts for something after all.

The astute Douglas fell back on the old expedient of overreaching the English invader by turning the country south of the Forth into a solitude. But time was indispensable, and in order to gain the necessary respite, he hurried to Roxburgh to profess friendship and ask a truce of ten days, on the pretext of consulting his fellow-magnates as to the terms of submission. Overjoyed at this unwonted spirit of compliance, Edward granted the request, and awaited in proud confidence the day that was to confirm the gift of a new kingdom and unite Scotland and England under his undisputed sway. Meanwhile the canny Scots were busy driving their

flocks and carting their gear beyond the Forth, and Edward discovered that he had been completely duped. Not a man appeared at the end of the stipulated ten days to take the oath of fealty, and to enforce it he must seek them out in the fastnesses to which they had retired in unbending defiance. History might have warned him of the futility of such an attempt, but his ambition and his resentment would not profit from past experience of the tenacity of Scottish patriotism. Forward tramped the splendid English array under that pseudo-Scottish banner, and the work of devastation began. Every village, homestead, and keep on the march through the Merse and across the Lammermoors into Lothian was burned to the ground. Even the monastery and the stately church of the Minorite Friars at Haddington were given to the flames. There was no attempt on the part of the Scots, who confined themselves to furtive attacks on his flank and rear, and cut off the stragglers, to dispute his progress. They looked grimly on from their woods while the black smoke clouds rose over their deserted homes, all the way to Edinburgh, waiting for starvation and the storms of winter to help them to their revenge. At Edinburgh he took up his abode with sardonic satisfaction in the house of a certain worthy citizen who, on the eve of the battle of Neville's Cross, had obtained from David the office of Mayor of London *in prospectu*, as the reward for his services on that unlucky expedition. Edward told the story to his lords at supper, and had his laugh at the would-be mayor's expense. But the laugh ere long changed sides as the days passed, and the fleet on which he relied for supplies was

caught in the wild north blast and driven back to the English coast, or engulfed in the waves. In this disaster the superstition of the time beheld the judgment of God for the burning of the church of Haddington, and the pillage of the White Kirk of Our Lady by the seashore by some English sailors, who stripped her ladyship of her jewels, and carried off two canons of the abbey of Holyrood in charge of it. It was now the turn of the Scots to chuckle as they saw the desperate situation of their oppressors, whose rations were fast running to *nil*, while the stout old castle frowned defiance down from its impregnable rock, and his ships were mostly at the bottom of the sea. In his spleen he threatened to burn the town; yielded, however, to the blandishments of the Countess of Douglas, who came from Dalkeith to intercede for the townsfolk, and spared Scotland and his own reputation this additional outrage. In spite of Baliol's "tulchan" crown, he was fain to beat an ignominious retreat, harassed by the Scots, who lurked in the woods and glens along his route. In the forest of Melrose he narrowly escaped capture at the hands of the redoubtable Douglas, who had more than once shown himself an adept at laying snares for his enemy. Waiting till the foremost divisions of the English army had passed, Douglas, shouting his dread battle-cry of "Douglas, Douglas!" fell upon one in which Edward was supposed to be riding, and took its leaders prisoners before the king, who, by a happy chance, was that day leading the one behind it, could gallop up to their rescue. With this additional sting to lacerate the sense of failure, he continued his retreat across the border, leaving the Earl of

Northampton and Lords Neville and Percy to guard it, and cursing the sturdy spirit of freedom that, in spite of the intestine divisions of Scotland, had once more frustrated the ambition of its would-be conqueror.¹⁹

This experience of Scottish patriotic stubbornness appears to have convinced Edward of the futility of his pretensions to rule Scotland against its will. He resumed the negotiation for the ransom of David and for peace,²⁰ on the understanding that he must submit to recognise the independence of Scotland, a truce having meanwhile been arranged.²¹ Eighteen months passed, however, before the terms of liberation were finally arranged at Berwick. The difficulty of arrangement was enhanced by David's refusal to renounce the alliance with France. At length the representatives²² of the three Estates of Scotland who had been authorised to treat with full powers by the Scottish Parliament,²³ on the 26th September 1357, assembled with much state in the border town in the beginning of October. Thither came the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Durham and Carlisle, and Lords Percy, Neville, Scrope, and Musgrave, as the plenipotentiaries of Edward, accompanied by King David and the military array of the north of England, to

¹⁹ Avesbury, pp. 450-456; Fordun, i. 373-375; Wyntoun, ii. 485; Baker, pp. 227; Knighton, ii. 85-86; Walsingham, i. 280-281; Froissart, v. 332-339.

²⁰ *Fœdera*, iii. 325; *Rot. Scot.*, i. 791. ²¹ *Ibid.*, iii. 327.

²² They were, for the clergy, the Bishops of St Andrews, Caithness, and Brechin; for the barons, the Earls of March, Angus, and Sutherland; and Sirs Thomas Murray, William Livingstone, and Robert Griffin, and eleven members for the burghs.

²³ *Fœdera*, iii. 370.

discuss the terms of the treaty.²⁴ This time there was no mere display of diplomatic finesse in order to evade rather than achieve a practical issue, as on so many previous occasions. Edward's representatives agreed to surrender the Scottish king for a payment of £100,000, to be paid in annual instalments of £10,000 within a period of ten years. Twenty of the sons of the Scottish nobility were to be sent to England as hostages. In addition, three of the principal nobles, who might be exchanged at any time for three others, should reside at the English Court. In default of payment, David should surrender himself prisoner. In order to maintain peace and nurture more friendly relations, commerce by sea and land should be unrestricted, and in case of infraction by either side, instant reparation should be made.²⁵

One hundred thousand pounds was a high price for poor Scotland to pay even for a king, but for the sake of independence it cheerfully bore the sacrifice. England eventually got every penny of its prize money. If we did not regard it as a fair indemnity for the invasion of England, it would savour of grasping greed on Edward's part, especially as his prisoner was his own brother-in-law! Even in the matter of indemnity Edward was Scotland's debtor by a long way, if the losses accruing from English invasions were to be thrown into the opposite scale. He certainly got the best of the bargain, not merely in the form of a welcome addition to his revenues for ten

²⁴ Rot. Scot., i. 811.

²⁵ For the treaty, which is dated 3rd October, see Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, i. 158-161, and *Fœdera*, iii. 372; cf. Wyntoun, ii. 496-498; Fordun, i. 377; Froissart, vi. 19-21.

years to come, but in the handle which it gave him for holding Scotland in check in his contest with France. The presence of so large a number of influential Scottish hostages was a whip to lash the King of France with, as well as keep his Scottish ally henceforth in his proper place of respect for England.

King David got a warm reception from the Scots, in spite of the drain on their scanty resources which his return involved. They greeted him with the rude impetuosity which England had learned to fight shy of, if not to respect. They were not sufficiently sophisticated to realise that a king is not a fellow-mortal, and on the day after his arrival crowded round him while on the way to a sitting of his council in a manner that shocked and disgusted a man whose inactivity and amorous indulgence had rendered effeminate. David treated this rude but kindly familiarity in the spirit of a royal coxcomb, who has forgotten good breeding and self-restraint in the overweening sense of a false dignity. He seized a mace, and swore to knock down the first man that came near him.²⁶ To pay £100,000 for the privilege of being knocked down by royal hands was doubtless a very comforting reflection. In spite of this churlish conduct, the Scots exerted themselves to meet the obligations of their king. Parliament, which met at Scone on the 6th November (1357), placed at David's disposal all the wool and fleeces of the kingdom at a reduced price.²⁷

²⁶ Wyntoun, ii. 497-498. He adds, however, that David asserted himself energetically in the government of the country.

²⁷ Four marks for every sack and every bundle of wool-fells instead of six, which was the usual price.

From the profit accruing from the sale of these, on David's account, part of the annual instalment of the ransom was to be discharged. In addition it decreed a tax on property, of which an exact return was to be made by commissioners appointed for the purpose, and the resumption of all lands alienated from the Crown.²⁸

The famous raid of the Prince of Wales into Languedoc during the autumn of 1355 was some compensation for the failure of Edward's invasion of Scotland. The prince reached Bordeaux in the beginning of October, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the inhabitants, who came forth in procession,²⁹ led by the clergy and the town magnates, to greet him. The prince was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet, and instead of awaiting the spring, forthwith planned with the Gascon lords an expedition into the south of France. He set out on the 5th October with an army in three divisions, sixty thousand strong. The vanguard, which consisted of three thousand men-at-arms, besides a corresponding number of archers and light troops,³⁰ was commanded by the Earl of Warwick, Reginald de Cobham, Lord Beauchamp of Somerset, Lords Clifford and Hampton, and seven Gascon magnates. The centre, led by the prince himself, with whom were the Earl of Oxford, Lords Barth. de Burghersh, John de Lisle, De la Ware, Maurice de Berkeley, John de Roos, mayor of Bordeaux, the Captal de Buch, and other English and Gascon cavaliers, contained a splendid body

²⁸ See Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, i. 133-134.

²⁹ Baker, p. 229.

³⁰ Brigancii et bidners, as Baker calls them (p. 231).

of seven thousand men-at-arms. The Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk led the four thousand men-at-arms who composed the rear. With this formidable array he marched rapidly forward into the county of Armagnac, southwards of the Garonne, whose count was King John's lieutenant in these southern parts. Here the business of pillage began. These English and Gascon mercenaries were bent on making the most of their visit to that rich country, watered by the tributaries of the Garonne and the Aude, that flow through the beautiful valleys of the lower spurs of the Pyrenees. There was no force capable of resisting their progress. The Count of Armagnac prudently, if pusillanimously, kept out of the way at Toulouse, waiting for the reinforcements which Jacques de Bourbon, Constable of France, was gathering at Limoges for the purpose of hurrying to his aid. The prince had thus a clear field for pushing the business of pillage, and with such a formidable army at his disposal, the opulent towns situated in these fertile vales were an easy prey. There is a *verve* of romance even in the succinct official narratives and the dry chronicles that tell of the progress of the expedition through olive and vine-clad vales of exuberant beauty and fertility, and past towns, villages, castles, where the sweet Muscat wine flowed like water, and feasting was the order of the day, and untold booty was to be had for the taking. Even the horses were given wine to drink, when water could not be had, with ludicrous and sometimes fatal results. There had not been so jolly a raid for many a day, for this lovely region had long been spared the ravages of war, and was "one of the finest, fattest countries in

the world," says the chronicler, with the fruits of summer and autumn stored in abundance to delight the untutored palate of the northern spoiler, and any amount of plate, jewellery, and other valuables, to satisfy his greed of gear. Unhappily the predatory horde was not content to rob and riot amid the pregnant abundance of good things. There was scarcely any attempt at resistance, the miserable inhabitants fleeing to the mountains, but whether there was resistance or not, its track through the counties of Armagnac, Asterac, Comminges, and Lisle, was marked by devastation and ruin, and the smoke of burning towns, villages, and windmills. Near Toulouse, the prince forded the Garonne and the Ariege, to the astonishment of the natives, who had deemed themselves secure behind these deep and difficult rivers, and held on eastwards to Mount Giscard, leaving Toulouse, which was too strongly held by the Count of Armagnac to be taken by assault, unmolested. Mount Giscard, Avignonnet, Castelnaudry, and other towns, which offered a more spirited resistance than had hitherto been experienced, were stormed, pillaged, and burned. "In the region of Toulouse," wrote the prince to the Bishop of Winchester, "many a good town and fortress was burned and destroyed, for the land is very rich and abundant in good things, and not a day passed but towns, castles, and fortresses were captured by one or other of our battles." At Carcassonne—"a town larger, stronger, and more beautiful than York"—where the marauders struck the valley of the Aude; the citadel, to which the citizens and the inhabitants of the surrounding county had retired, successfully resisted every attempt to take

it, but the town, after being stripped of an enormous booty, was consigned to the flames. From Carcassonne he continued his devastating march along the course of the Aude to Narbonne, "a town only second in size to London," situated within a league or two of the shore "of the Grecian Sea," as the Mediterranean was called. Here again the citadel was stoutly defended, and resisted every effort to take it, but the town shared the fate of Carcassonne, in spite of the efforts of the Pope to mediate a truce. The prince refused even to see the papal messengers, curtly referring his Holiness for further negotiation to his father. The tidings of the approach of the Count of Armagnac, the Constable, Marshal Clermont, and the Prince of Orange, at the head of thirty thousand men, compelled him, however, to pause and retrace his steps before he could reduce the citadel (10th November). The count did not risk a battle, but having succeeded in his object, retired towards Toulouse. The prince then declined south-westwards into the valley of the Upper Aude, burning Limoux and other towns *en route*, before bending north-westwards towards Toulouse, and recrossing the Garonne at Carbonne. Armagnac was still chary about hazarding an engagement, and contented himself with manœuvring on his right flank in the hope of being able to take him at a disadvantage. The prince, on his part, was eager to catch him napping, and kept up the game of hide-and-seek with characteristic zest westwards across the Save. At Gimont there was a skirmish on the 22nd November, and it looked as if the French would at last make a stand. The prince drew up his divisions in order of battle, in expectation of attack, but

Armagnac finally decamped during the night, and left him unmolested to pursue the return march with his booty-laden waggons to Bordeaux, which he reached on the 9th December. He had ample cause for self-gratulation, if wholesale destruction of an enemy's country could be matter for legitimate gratulation, as it unfortunately was in those times. "Be assured of this," wrote Sir John Wingfield to the Bishop of Winchester (good news to the bishop evidently), "that since the war against the King of France began, there has nowhere else been wrought such havoc as during this raid. For the lands and towns which we have laid waste brought in the French king each year for the prosecution of the war more revenue than was furnished by half of his kingdom, . . . which I could prove to you by the accounts found in the various towns and in the houses of the receivers-general."³¹

Even in midwinter the prince did not give his men the benefit of the usual inaction of the stormy season. While his father was pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp project of subjugating the Scots, he organised a series of small expeditions in Guienne, and succeeded in recovering no less than five towns and seventeen castles in the interval between the 9th December 1355 and the 22nd January 1356.³² In the spring he made preparations for another raid on a large scale, this time northwards, which was to end in the triumph of Poitiers. The development

³¹ For an account of this famous raid, see Baker, pp. 229-245, who incorporated in his chronicle the detailed itinerary of an eyewitness; Avesbury, pp. 432-445, who gives descriptive letters by Sir John Wingfield and the Prince of Wales; Froissart, v. 399-354.

³² Wingfield's letter to Sir Richard Stafford, in Avesbury, pp. 445-447.

of events in Normandy promised to prove a welcome diversion in its favour, and to Normandy we must turn for a little in order the better to understand the brilliant sequel.

We may pass over, with cursory mention, a papal embassy to Edward to appeal for peace, as the pacific mission³³ of Simon of Sudbury, the Pope's nuncio, came to nothing. Instead of sending, in accordance with Innocent's request, plenipotentiaries to meet his cardinals at Calais, he obtained a grant of a fresh tenth from the clergy, and despatched the Duke of Lancaster to Normandy, in response to the appeal of Philip, brother of the King of Navarre, for aid and alliance in a fresh quarrel with John. The origin of this quarrel was as follows. There had been a revolt at Arras against the oppressive taxation, particularly the salt tax, or gabelle, by which King John, with the approbation of the States General, which met at Paris in December 1355, strove to provide the sinews of war. The insurrectionary contagion spread to Normandy, and several of the Norman magnates, notably the King of Navarre and the Count of Harcourt, sympathised with the people, and encouraged them to resist. Malice added that in so doing they were acting in unison with the King of England.³⁴ John lent a too willing ear to this slander, and hurried to Rouen, where his son, the Duke of Normandy, was holding his feudal court, and was to give a banquet to the King of Navarre and other suspected nobles on the

³³ *Fœdera*, iii. 323.

³⁴ Froissart disbelieves the story of the treason imputed to Charles of Navarre, and Edward in a letter to the Pope assured his Holiness that he had not conspired with himself against his lawful sovereign (*Fœdera*, iii. 329).

5th April 1356. Bursting into the banqueting hall of the castle of Rouen, with thirty armed followers, John angrily seized Navarre by the collar, and dragged him from his seat, crying—"Abominable traitor, you are not worthy to sit at my son's table. By the soul of my father, I will neither eat nor drink as long as you live." One of the esquires of Navarre threw himself upon the infuriated monarch, dagger in hand, and threatened to kill him. King John let go his hold, and turning to his followers, bade them arrest both. They were dragged off into an adjoining room, in spite of protestations of innocence, whence the King of Navarre was conveyed to Paris and thrown into the Chatelet. Jeddart justice was meted out to the Count of Harcourt, John de Granville, and two other magnates, who were dragged out of the castle, and beyond the walls, and straightway beheaded. John even refused them the consolation of a confessor, and savagely bade them confess their crimes in the presence of the people.³⁵ These Valois kings were prompt men, when in a passion, and certainly the law could not always vaunt the honour of their patronage.

Incensed at this outrage, Philip of Navarre responded by defying King John (28th May), and despatching envoys to implore the aid of Edward,³⁶ and offer to espouse his cause against their common enemy. Nothing could have been more opportune for Edward's bellicose plans. On the 18th June, the Duke of Lancaster, accompanied by young John de Montfort, landed at La Hogue, to take part in

³⁵ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 33-36; *Continuator of G. de Nangis*, ii. 229-233; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 109-110; *Froissart*, v. 354-365; *Avesbury*, pp. 460-461.

³⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 328 (12th May).

the civil war which John had so rashly conjured. A small force had preceded him by a couple of weeks, and had aided Philip and Godfrey de Harcourt, who were already on the warpath, to reduce the fortified abbey of Lestre. From Brittany, too, came a reinforcement of several hundred archers and men-at-arms, under Robert Knolles. With this united force, which did not exceed 2,500 men-at-arms and archers, he began his rapid march eastwards from the abbey of Montebourg on the 22nd June, by way of Torigny, Argences, and Lisieux to Pont-Audemer, where they arrived on the 29th. Pont-Audemer, which belonged to the King of Navarre, was besieged by a French army, but at the approach of the invaders it beat a precipitate retreat, leaving siege engines and baggage behind. After throwing supplies for a year into the castle, the duke resumed his march, bending southwards by Bec-Hellouin and Conches, which he took by storm and burned on the 3rd July, to Breteuil, another possession of the King of Navarre, which was being besieged by the French. Here, as at Pont-Audemer, the enemy decamped at his approach on the 4th. After victualling the garrison, he held on the same day to Verneuil. Verneuil, defended by stout walls, and held by a strong garrison though it was, was taken by assault, but the reduction of the castle cost him a severe three days' struggle (6th July).

By this time King John had gathered an army of about fifty thousand men at Tubœuf, near Aigle, in his rear, and he was compelled to turn back to meet or evade it. At Aigle two heralds brought a challenge to fight a pitched battle. The duke put on a bold front, and sent back word that if his enemy

wished to bar his passage, he was welcome to make the attempt. John drew up his army in order of battle, but Lancaster was too weak to risk an encounter, and drew off under cover of an advance party of men-at-arms, which he posted in battle array to throw his antagonist off the scent, and then withdrew, after meanwhile making good his retreat for several leagues. Instead of pursuing, John allowed him to continue his retreat unmolested by Argentan, Torigny, Carentan, back to Montebourg, which he reached on the 13th July. The rapidity and skill with which he had carried out with a small force this three weeks' raid were as remarkable as the want of ability and energy to take advantage of his superiority of numbers was humiliating to his antagonist.³⁷ His success confirmed Philip of Navarre and Godfrey de Harcourt in their determination to continue in rebellion, and to recognise the sovereign claim of Edward over Normandy. With this intent Philip proceeded to England to render homage to the English monarch,³⁸ while Lancaster passed into Brittany, where he had been appointed Edward's lieutenant, to prosecute by force the claim of the young De Montfort to the duchy.³⁹

³⁷ For the succinct but exact itinerary of this expedition see Avesbury, pp. 461-468; cf. *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 39-44; *Chronique Normande*, p. 110; Froissart, v. 366-371, whose account is confused and incorrect. He makes the mistake of bringing the Duke of Lancaster from Brittany into Normandy, whereas he sailed direct from England to Normandy, and of bringing over Philip of Navarre and G. de Harcourt to England before, and not after, this expedition.

³⁸ The treaty between Philip and Edward is in *Fœdera*, iii. 340, and is dated 4th September. Harcourt did homage to Edward by proxy at St Sauveur le Viscomte on the 18th July.

³⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 335.

Lancaster gone, John laid siege to Breteuil, where he was gratified by the arrival of several distinguished foreign warriors, among them Lord William Douglas, and a contingent of trusty Scottish adventurers, Don Henry of Castille, &c. The resources of the ordinary siege artillery proving impotent against the stout old castle and its heroic garrison, John at last had a great movable wooden tower constructed, capable of containing several hundred men-at-arms in its various storeys. The garrison, on the other hand, took care to fortify the walls opposite this monster contrivance with cannon, and beat off the attack by battering it with shot and igniting its roof with Greek fire. Despair of being relieved compelled its commander, however, to capitulate towards the end of August, and the news that the Prince of Wales had invaded the heart of France induced King John to hasten the negotiation by the offer of easy terms. Hurrying back to Paris, he set out southwards for Chartres in the end of August, to concentrate his forces, with the determination to avenge the devastation of southern and central France.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Froissart, v. 371-384.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS AND THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY (1356-1360).

THE prince started from Bordeaux in the beginning of July,¹ with intent to push forward into Normandy, where he had learned by report that an English force had landed. Rumour added that, besides the Duke of Lancaster, Edward himself was again on the warpath, and the prince was eager to join his father.² He directed his march northwards through Perigord, Limousin, Auvergne, and Berri, where there was plenty of corn and wine to regale his army of eight thousand men. Wholesale pillage marked his track in these fertile provinces, as in Languedoc. What his army could not consume or carry away, it destroyed. Wine cellars, granaries, grain stacks were remorselessly consumed, and the population left to starve, by the *elite* of English and Gascon chivalry, in accordance with the canons of a barbarous warfare. Thanks to the itinerary of an observant monkish scribe, we can follow its lurid track day by day, in more or less intelligent fashion, from Bergerac to Brantôme, Quisser, Rochechouart,

¹ According to his own letter to the Bishop of Worcester. The anonymous monk of Malmesbury, who has given an itinerary of this expedition in *Eulogium Historiarum*, iii. 215-222, says that he started in the beginning of August. He must refer to the actual beginning of operations.

² Baker, pp. 246-247.

Lesterp, Belac, Lusac, St Benoit du Sault, to Argenton on the Creuse, where the marauders arrived on the 21st August, after a seventeen days' march. Thence they held on (scouring the country in zigzag fashion) to Chateauroux, Bourgdieu, Issoudun, La Ferté, Lury, where they crossed the Cher, Vierzon, Aubigny, and Romorantin. Northwards of Vierzon, towards Romorantin, the advance guard came into touch with the levies whom John had pushed forward across the Loire into Berri, under the Lords de Crain and Bouchicaux. After a successful skirmish with a detachment of the enemy, under Gris Mouton, it fell into an ambush, laid for it by these leaders, and lost a number of prisoners and all its booty. The flight of the remainder back to the main body apprised the prince of this reverse, and a strong party of horsemen started in pursuit. In the combat that followed, the French were worsted, and the prisoners and booty recovered, the enemy galloping away to Romorantin, hotly followed by the victors. In the stout old castle of Romorantin they stood at bay for five days, and only surrendered, on the 3rd September, after the walls had been badly battered, and the principal tower ignited by the Greek fire thrown into it. From Romorantin the prince struck westwards towards Tours, in the hope of finding a passage across the Loire, his intention still being to effect a junction with Lancaster and Edward in Normandy. News travelled slowly in those days, otherwise he would have known that Edward had not been in Normandy, and that Lancaster had left it six weeks before. Between Blois and Tours, neither bridge nor fordable spot could be found, the Loire being in flood and the bridges

broken down. In these circumstances, the wisest course was to get back to Bordeaux as fast as possible, for the prince had a suspicion that King John was on his track, and was beginning to feel very uncomfortable in consequence, in the face of that impassable river. He therefore turned southwards, recrossing the Cher, and passing the Indre on the 11th September. That night he spent at Montbazon, where he received a visit from the Cardinal of Perigord, who offered his mediation in the interest of peace. He nevertheless continued his march by Ste. Maure and La Haye, on the Creuse, as far as Chatellerault, where he loitered from the 14th to the morning of Saturday, the 17th.

Both armies were still apparently in ignorance of each other's exact whereabouts. The truth was that King John had been moving southward from Chartres, at the head of fifty thousand men, to Blois, where he crossed the Loire on the 11th, and had pushed forward to Amboise, Loches, La Haye, on the Creuse, where we discover him on the 13th, had crossed that stream and moved southwards as far as Chauvigny, on the Vienne (15th September), in the hope of intercepting the retreating English, feverishly anxious lest his prey should escape.³ It was at Chatellerault, on the morning of Friday, the 16th, that the prince discovered, to his astonishment, that his antagonist was on his front instead of his rear. What he had feared had, by an unlucky chance, happened, for in spite of the assurances of the English chronicler that he was eager to meet the foe,⁴ his anxiety to escape was intensified by the news. A hostile army, fully five times larger than his own,

³ Eulogium, iii. 221.

⁴ Ibid., iii. 222.

lay across his track, and could not long remain in ignorance of the good luck that had landed it in the very spot where consummate generalship would have planted it for the purpose of intercepting the enemy ! But might not the prince still slip past it, in continuation of this artless game of hide-and-seek ? He would try it, at any rate, and in the early morning of Saturday, the 17th, set out southwards from Chatellerault, passing the Vienne at that place, and riding his hardest⁵ across country, in the hope of giving his antagonist the go-by between Poitiers and Chauvigny, and escaping to St Jean d'Angely. This hope was destined to prove illusory, for on that day his vanguard came into collision with the French rear-guard, under the Counts of Auxerre and Joigny, and the Marshal of Burgundy, in a wood at La Chaboterie, near Chauvigny, and but a few miles from Poitiers. In the skirmish that followed, the French had at first the advantage. The English took to flight, pursued by the victors, who dashed against the prince's division, and paid for their ardour by their complete discomfiture, and the capture of their leaders.

The prince halted for the night in a wood hard by the castle of La Chaboterie, and on the morning of Sunday, the 18th, resumed his march south-westwards towards Poitiers. His army moved alertly in three divisions, and did not exceed seven thousand, or at most eight thousand men, of whom four thousand were men-at-arms, two thousand archers, and one thousand light troops.⁶ The first division, or van-

⁵ *Princeps vera ultra modum equitabat* (Eulogium, iii. 222).

⁶ Baker, p. 251, whose numbers agree with those given by Froissart, v. 405.

guard, was commanded by the Earls of Warwick and Oxford; of the second, or centre, he held command himself; while the Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk led the rear. Ere long the reconnoitring party, which preceded it, galloped back with the tidings that the French army lay between him and Poitiers. There was nothing for it, then, but to halt on the high ground overlooking the plain, extending from Maupertuis (the modern La Cardinerie) towards Beauvoir, and make the best of it, in the hope that Providence would somehow get him out of the trap, and save him the hazard of fighting what seemed an impossible battle. In order, meanwhile, to be ready for the emergency of a sudden attack, he dismounted his men, with the exception of a small number reserved for the charge, and placed the horses and baggage under the care of his camp followers. His right was protected by the woods and the abbey of Nouaillé, his left by the ravine of the Miausson, whilst the slope in front was covered with vineyards and brushwood.

It was in this strong position that Eustace de Ribemont, whom John sent forward with a reconnoitring party, discovered the English army. "What news?" asked John, who had meanwhile been busy concentrating his divisions on the low ground between Maupertuis and Beauvoir, on his return. "Sire, we estimate the number of the enemy at 2,000 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 1,500 light troops." "And how are they posted?" queried the king. "Sire, they are arrayed in a very strong position, and they seem massed in one battle, and right skilfully too, for their archers are ranged behind hedges and bushes on either side of a road, which you must ascend in

order to attack them, and only four men-at-arms can move up it abreast. At the top of this passage, amid vines and brushwood, where it is impossible to ride or march, are ranged their men-at-arms, with archers in the front in the form of a harrow, and all on foot, and we can only come at them by discomfiting these archers—a thing difficult to achieve.” “And how,” asked the king, “do you propose that we should attack them?” “Sire,” was the reply, “on foot, except three hundred horsemen well armed and mounted to disperse these archers and clear the way for our men-at-arms.”

This hasty but chivalrous proposal was welcomed by the king as the perfection of generalship. Truly French—dashing and splendid, befitting the crowned leader of an invincible host, second only to Don Quixote in lofty daring and thirst of vengeance! Up then and get the army in battle array, ready for the glorious charge, and forthwith the plain was alive with troops of armed men hurrying to array themselves under their banners in their respective battles! In the midst of this martial haste and excitement that broke the quiet of that Sunday, the 18th of September, the Cardinal of Perigord approached from Poitiers in solemn procession to raise his voice once more on behalf of the gospel of peace on earth and goodwill to men. John was in no evangelical mood on this martial Sunday, and stubbornly resisted every appeal to sheathe the sword in favour of negotiation through the cardinal's mediation. At last (remembering that the respite of a day would enable him to increase his strength by the arrival of the reinforcements hurrying towards Poitiers⁷) he con-

⁷ Eulogium, iii. 223.

sented that the cardinal should be the bearer of an offer of mediation to the prince.

It was with genuine joy that the prince observed the approach of the would-be peacemaker. Never cardinal was more welcome than to the man who less than a year ago, at Narbonne, had so rudely spurned the offer of papal mediation. Hard necessity has tamed the rough warrior into ready deference to the holy man as he expatiates on the horror of shedding Christian, instead of Pagan, blood, and proposes a conference between the belligerents. "My dear son," concluded he, "if you have justly considered the great power of the King of France, you will permit me to arrange terms with him on your behalf if I can." "With all my heart," returned the prince; "I am ready to accept any compromise compatible with my honour and that of my army." Thereupon the cardinal returned to the French camp to argue the point with King John. "Sire," said he, "you need be in no haste to fight; the English are as good as undone, for escape they cannot. Grant, therefore, a respite till sunrise to-morrow." King John still demurred, the more ardent spirits of his council of war, particularly Eustace de Ribemont and John de Landas, being for instant attack. Ultimately the cardinal succeeded, by dint of expostulation and argument, not only in obtaining the desired respite, but in bringing the bellicose king to nominate eleven commissioners to deliberate with as many representatives of the prince on the terms of an accommodation.⁸ The French army retired to its tents, with the exception of the "battle" of the

⁸ Eulogium, iii. 223, who alone mentions the appointment of commissioners.

Marshals d' Andrehem and Clermont, which stood to arms. Back rode the cardinal to announce the good news, and the negotiation began. It lasted the whole day,⁹ the holy man hurrying backwards and forwards in prosecution of his noble mission as mediator, imploring, arguing, "preaching," his level best on behalf of reason, religion, and humanity. The prince went at length to the verge of concession, offering to restore all the places conquered during the expedition, to surrender all his prisoners, to swear not to bear arms against France for seven years, nay, to give up Calais, Guisnes, and all his conquests in Gascony.¹⁰ Even these liberal concessions failed to satisfy John, whose army was increasing every hour. The prince must surrender at discretion, and forthwith yield himself with one hundred of his knights prisoners, or take the consequences. This was too humiliating for these high-spirited Englishmen, and at nightfall the wearied cardinal desisted and retired worsted from the field.

The issue of the fatal morrow, Monday, the 19th September, must decide which side should pay most dearly for the folly of frustrating the cardinal's noble effort to avert the carnage of that bloody day. At sunrise he made a last despairing effort to protract the armistice. Would not King John, for the love of Christ, agree to a truce till Christmas? Marshal Clermont and William Douglas¹¹ added their exhortations in favour of a blockade at least, instead of a battle, seeing that the English must soon be

⁹ *Eulogium*, iii. 223; cf. Baker, p. 253.

¹⁰ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 51-52.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50. Baker says that Douglas vehemently advised the attack (p. 253).

starved into surrender. They were overborne by the vehement arguments of Marshal d'Audrehem and Geoffrey de Chagny. What folly, cried they, to allow the English to escape in this facile fashion! Are they not a starving handful, ignorant of the country, and miserably fatigued with the toils of a laborious march, &c.? He who advises a truce is guilty of nothing less than *lese majesté*.¹² Marshal Clermont vigorously rebutted the aspersion against his honour, and a hot altercation between him and his fellow-marshal ensued in the royal presence. His efforts to second the cardinal were unavailing, however, and after sending back word to the prince that he must be prepared for the worst, the latter returned to Poitiers.

John was in fact already marshalling his host for the attack. All over the plain his divisions might be seen moving to the sound of trumpet, to take up their positions in order of battle. Ultimately they resolved themselves into four great "battles" or corps. The vanguard was composed of that of the two marshals Clermont and D'Audrehem, and the Duke of Athenes, in front a picked body of five hundred horsemen in complete armour under Guichard d'Angle, the Lord d'Aubigny, and Eustace de Ribemont, to cleave a path through the English archers for the men-at-arms behind. Among these latter were William and Archibald Douglas, and their two hundred trusty Scots, impatient to avenge the wrongs of Scotland on French soil, and a division of German mercenaries under the Counts of Saarbruck and Nido, and John of Nassau. Then came the great battle of the Duke of Normandy,

¹² Baker, pp. 253-254.

the king's eldest son, with whom were his two brothers Louis and John, and the Duke of Bourbon and the Lord of St Venant to aid him with their counsel. The Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, commanded the third battle, which was intended to serve as the rearguard of the first two.¹³ The fourth battle, the largest of all, was held in reserve by the king in person. It was pre-eminent by the presence of the Oriflamme, the standard of France, borne this day by Geoffrey de Charny, and surrounded by many of the noblest warriors of the kingdom, such as Jacques de Bourbon, Robert of Artois, Count of Eu, and his brother, the Count of Longueville (sons of Philip's sworn enemy, whom his son had restored to title and favour), the Count of Sancerre, the Count of Dammartin, and many more. Twenty of these resplendent cavaliers were clad exactly as the king, in order, apparently, to screen his identity from the English. With the exception of the small band of horsemen in front, the whole was on foot,¹⁴ and the vast array covered the low ground towards Beauvoir for several miles—too vast for the chroniclers to attempt an exact estimate, but at least six or seven times as numerous as the little Anglo-Gascon army; among the brush and vineyards, on the hillside yonder.¹⁵ It was a gay as well as an imposing spectacle, as the many-coloured banners (eighty-seven in number, according to Baker) and pennons fluttered in the morning breeze, and the armour, lances, and spears (their

¹³ Chandos Herald, whose account agrees with that of Froissart, v. 407-408.

¹⁴ Baker, p. 252.

¹⁵ Froissart estimates it at from fifty thousand to sixty thousand.

handles cut short this day to five feet in order to strike home more surely) of the great host glittered in the sunshine. Well might the eye of King John gleam with martial pride in anticipation of triumph as he rode from battle to battle haranguing each in turn. At Crecy there had been misgiving and disorder from the first to mar the satisfaction of Philip as his "battles" jostled each other in their mad eagerness for the fray. It was a different spectacle that met the gaze of Philip's son at Poitiers, surveying the bellicose manhood of France drawn up in magnificent array over that rolling plain of Maupertuis. Here order and enthusiasm were combined as each "battle" responded to the rousing appeal of the monarch. "At Paris, at Chartres, at Rouen, at Orleans, you cursed the English, and longed to measure swords with them. Behold them in your presence. Remember the wrongs they have done you, and avenge yourselves for all the losses and sufferings they have inflicted on France, for I promise you that we shall do battle with them, and God be with us." "Sire," was the reply, "this will we do, and God be our aid." "Kill them all," directed the king; "bring only the prince a prisoner to me."¹⁶ Little recked he at that moment of proud confidence that before the sun had gone down he himself would be the prince's prisoner.

Unfortunately for France, the men in whom it must perforce, in virtue of feudal institutions, rely for defence had become demoralised by the evil influences of the time. Greedy of gain, devotees of an effeminate luxury, alike mercenary and corrupt, those haughty feudal seigneurs were not the men

¹⁶ Chandos Herald.

to lead an army, more or less infected by the evil example of its commanders, to victory, even against the handful of tried warriors, so ably commanded on the high ground yonder. The charge of cowardice which lies on their memory is hinted at by Froissart, and bitterly re-echoed in the satire of the time. Contemporaries saw in their collapse a worse crime, that of treason. At all events, many of them were not above mounting a valet on horseback, and passing him off as a man-at-arms, in order to increase their earnings.

When the English beheld the imposing array on the plain below, not a few rued¹⁷ the day that the prince had left so large a proportion of his levies behind to guard Guienne, when he set out on that dubious march from Bordeaux. It was indeed a desperate situation, too hopeless apparently to expect the miracle of Crecy to repeat itself. To fight a defensive battle was to risk defeat by overwhelming numbers; to remain where he was, was suicidal, even if the French refrained from attack, owing to the dearth of provisions;¹⁸ to retreat was the only feasible expedient, but how retreat in the face of the armed might of France? Fairly caught is the conclusion that stares him in the face, unless King John blunders egregiously, and gives a chance to English generalship and valour to equalise the vast disproportion of numbers. But it is hardly conceivable that even a king, who commands by right of rank, and not of ability, as of old, can blunder himself into disaster with seven to one to the good, and ample supplies to obviate the necessity of hasty

¹⁷ Baker, p. 252; cf. Eulogium, iii. 224.

¹⁸ Froissart, v. 419.

measures. He has only to keep his army arrayed in that plain for two days at most (as William Douglas has vainly tried to persuade him to do) to starve the prince into surrender.

Of the three alternatives, the prince decided to make trial of the last, and gave the order to cross the defile of the Miausson on his left in the hope of outflanking the French (under cover of the hilly wooded ground), and escaping to St Jean d'Angely.¹⁹ If the attempt to draw off should bring on an attack, the ground which his army already occupied would lend itself admirably for fighting a defensive battle. As Eustace de Ribemont had observed, the slope was covered with thick scrub, vineyard, and corn-field, accessible only by a narrow road. Moreover, it was separated from the plain by a hedge, flanked by a ditch. The vanguard, or rather a portion of it, had already²⁰ crossed the gorge of the Miausson with the baggage; the remainder of the army was pre-

¹⁹ This is evident from the positive assertion of Chandos Herald—

Et li prince se deslogea,
A chivacher se chimina,
Car celui jour ne quidoit pas
Combatre, je ne vous mente pas,
Mais quidoit tres tout sans faille
Touts jours excuser la bataille.

Froissart has not noted this preliminary retreating movement, and modern historians who have merely copied Froissart have likewise ignored it. Baker (p. 257) says that the division of the prince crossed with the baggage and occupied a hill beyond, where they were screened by the thick brushwood from observation. The Chandos Herald says, however, that it was Warwick that led the vanguard which had charge of the baggage.

²⁰ This fact is also certified by Chandos Herald, Car ja fuist outre la rivière.

paring to follow.²¹ Will the prince succeed in thus quietly giving the enemy the slip? is the crucial question which the next half-hour must answer—yea or nay. The shaggy and undulating character of the ground may perchance give him a good start ere the great host on the plain below, whose view is interrupted by the hill on the left, can grasp the situation.

This day the god of war will by no means submit to so tame a conclusion. The lynx eye of Marshal d'Audrehem has caught a glimpse of those moving pennons of the advance guard as it rises out of the ravine, and disappears among the brushwood on the hill beyond. What movement is that among the scrub yonder? See, see, the English are taking to flight! Ha, sire! was I not a true prophet? Up then and after them, pursue, slay, let not a man escape! "Forward!" shouts the excited marshal; "forward! charge! charge ere they are clean lost to our grasp."²² "Good brother," returned his fellow-marshal of the first battle, De Clermont, "you are overhasty this day. Restrain your ardour, for these English flee not. We shall be there in time enough, I warrant." "Your slowness will lose us our prey," cried the excited marshal. "By St Denis, marshal, you are all too bold," replied De Clermont; "I shall be in among them before your lance has reached my horse's tail."

²¹ Chandos Herald—

Mais de l'autre part li François,
S'escριοient a haute vois,
Au roy qe les Englois s'enfuyoient, &c. &c.

²² Ibid—

Tost auerons les Englois perdus
Si ne les alons courrir sus.

Clermont, the only man besides Douglas who had some notion of generalship, had noted a wide gap in the hedge that enclosed the rising ground from the plain. He made straight for this gap, near which stood the division of Salisbury, with the intention of crushing it, and bursting in on the main body from the rear. Thus it came about that the English rear-guard had to bear the first shock of the battle.²³ But Salisbury had observed the threatening movement in time to block the gap with his men-at-arms, and mass his archers behind the hedge on either side. The head of the advancing French column was shivered by the deadly flight of arrows, and ere long the main body was staggering backwards before the onset of the men-at-arms, and shattered into hopeless rout with terrible slaughter, Clermont himself being among the killed.

Disaster equally crushing befell Marshal d'Audrehem, who in his eagerness to check the supposed flight of the English vanguard, had directed his attack against Warwick's division,²⁴ or rather the

²³ Baker, pp. 259, who is confirmed by the *Scalachronica*, and *Chandos Herald*—

Le Counte de Salesbury,
Du prince avoit l'arère garde,
Mais celui jour, si Dieu me garde,
Assembla tout premièrement.

²⁴ The *Chandos Herald* says that the attack of Clermont was repulsed before the English advance guard could repass the Miausson, and seems to imply that Warwick's division, of which it formed part, was not engaged before the advance of that of the Dauphin. He says, in fact, that the attack of both marshals was directed against Salisbury. Baker, however, asserts that Warwick was attacked by Audrehem, whilst Clermont attacked Salisbury, and he is confirmed by the *Scalachronica* and by Knighton.

portion of it that had not crossed the ravine of the Miausson, and occupied a position lower down the slope, and nearer the ravine, than that of Salisbury. Forward dashed the leading horsemen into the road that wound up the hill, and down whizzed the shower of English arrows, clattering against the armour of man and horse, and glancing off into the air. For a little there was no pause in the upward press of horse and rider, until Oxford, quickly manœuvring his archers sideways, directed them to shoot at the exposed forequarters of the horses. In a few minutes the head of the column was a chaos of struggling animals, plunging, tumbling, trampling their riders to death, surging backwards on the mass of infantry behind. Then the archers, reoccupying their former position, poured their volleys into the disordered ranks with terrible havoc, while the men-at-arms charged its front, increasing the slaughter and the confusion and the panic until the staggering column broke in headlong flight across the plain. Marshal d'Audrehem, and the Counts of Saarbruck, Nassau, and Nido, were taken prisoners after fighting fiercely till they were left almost alone in the mad *sauve qui peut*. Lord W. Douglas and his brother Archibald were dragged away²⁵ in the crowd, but their sturdy followers signalled their Scottish pluck by holding their ground as best they might in the fugitive press, and were nearly all killed.

The first onslaught had ended in black disaster for the French, but the victory was far from being won, and the prince and his generals, uniting their

²⁵ Fordun, i. 376.

divisions,²⁶ prudently held on to the hillside, and closed their ranks in expectation of the attack of the Duke of Normandy's "battle." They had not long to wait. Forward tramped the great mass, shouting its battle-cry of "St Denis!" which was answered by the defiant shout of "St George!" from the Anglo-Gascon ranks. As before, the archers played with fell effect on its front and flanks, and Warwick's and Oxford's men-at-arms, seizing the moment of incipient disorder, charged into the gaps. This time the resistance was longer and more stubborn, the French disputing the ground in bloody hand-to-hand conflict, the English archers expending their arrows and fighting with stones, swords, lances,²⁷ before the stubborn "battle" broke into rout, carrying the division of Orleans, which did not strike a single blow that day, with it in the rush of flight.

Even yet the fortune of the day was far from being decided in favour of the prince, and once again he prudently restrained²⁸ the victorious ardour of his divisions, and stuck to his ground in expectation of the third and supreme attack by the king in person, the archers meanwhile extracting²⁹ the arrows from the bodies of the dead and wounded in order to replenish their exhausted quivers. For King John would not hear of flight even with more than

²⁶ Both Baker and Chandos Herald note this fact—

Se rassemblèrent tout ensemble
Et viendrent, ensi q'il me semble
Tut contrement un montaigne
Tan qe ils mirent lour trahyn
A la bataille du Dauffyn.

²⁷ Knighton, ii. 89; cf. Eulogium, iii. 225.

²⁸ Baker, pp. 361-362; Knighton, ii. 89-90.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 262.

half his army a mass of fugitives. "Sire," cried a bloodstained warrior, galloping up to the king's battle (some³⁰ say it was William Douglas), "the English are victorious; the Duke of Normandy has retreated." "Forward," cried the king, in wild excitement, "for I will recover the day, or die on the field." In a few minutes the vast mass was in motion, trumpets sounding, banners unfurled. It might have been a fresh army instead of a single division, for the king's "battle" was at least four times larger than the prince's now thinned ranks, and its spirit was unbroken by the disaster to its predecessors. On it came with invincible tramp, eager to wipe away the disgrace of defeat, under the eye of the monarch himself. A grim piece of work still awaited these wearied and scanty Anglo-Gascon divisions. There was a moment's misgiving, and it required all the intrepidity of their leader to nerve them for the final struggle with that magnificent body of fresh and ardent warriors, over which floated the Oriflamme of France. "Alas, we are undone," ejaculated a knight, near the prince. "You lie, miserable coward," replied he, with spirit, "if you insinuate that I, alive, may be conquered." Take them in flank as well as in front, and every man to horse now for the charge, was the thought that flashed through his mind. Its array broken, English valour would do the rest. Accordingly he sent³¹ a detachment of archers and men-at-arms under the

³⁰ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, p. 53.

³¹ Froissart says that the prince detached the Captal before the commencement of the battle, and that he attacked the division of the Duke of Normandy; but Baker asserts that it was only on the advance of the king himself that he bethought him of this device (p. 263).

Gascon, the Captal de Buch, round the back of the hill on his left, in order to attack the right of the French column, while the archers expended their last arrows in galling its front. The French cross-bowmen replied with a furious volley, when suddenly the shout of "St George, Guienne!" resounded from the brushwood on their right, and out sallied the archers and men-at-arms, lacerating, felling the side of the vast square. The supreme moment which was to decide the day had now come. "Sire," cried the prince's trusty henchman, John of Chandos, "forward to the charge; God has delivered your enemy into your hands." Forward swept the English horse, the prince's banner in front, to the trumpet blast that, echoed from the hills and woods behind, above the roar of battle, and down went the first French ranks already torn by the discharge of the archers. Ever farther they hew their bloody path into the huge square, trampling their assailants in the gory mire, and pressing them back with fearful carnage. Long and fierce was the resistance, as a handful of horsemen here, a band of archers there—their arrows spent, and essaying their prowess as swordsmen now—hew and thrust ever farther in the bloody *mêlée*. At last the square was shattered into numerous groups of desperately fighting, struggling men, which was slowly diminished by slaughter or flight, till only the king and a handful of trusty warriors were left fighting fiercely around the Oriflamme. John, on foot like the rest of them, wielding his potent battle-axe, struck fatal blows into the press around him, his boy son Philip at his side, calling out, "Father, guard to the right, guard to the left," according as his assailants pressed

in on either side. Anon Geoffrey de Chagny sank down mortally wounded, and the Oriflamme was wrenched in triumph from his dying grasp. The king, standing almost single-handed amid a heap of his slain warriors, and surrounded by a group of English and Gascon foemen, crying, "Surrender, surrender, or you are a dead man!" could wield his battle-axe no longer, and yielded to the inevitable. "To whom shall I surrender? Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? Let him come forward." "Sire," returned Denis de Morbecque, a French refugee in English service, "he is not here, but yield yourself to me, and I will lead you to him." "Who are you?" asked the king. "Sire, I am Denis de Morbecque, a knight of Artois, but I serve the King of England, for I was compelled to flee the kingdom of France." "I yield myself to you," returned the king, handing him his glove. Then began an unseemly scramble by those near, eager to dispute the possession of so coveted a prize. "It was I that took him," shouted the wrangling English and Gascons that blocked the way.

Meanwhile the prince had given the order to cease fighting and sound the rally. "What news of the King of France," asked he of the Earl of Warwick. "Sire, I know not, but he is either dead or taken, for flee he would not." Thereupon the prince despatched two of his aides-de-camp in quest of certain information. Mounting a hillock, the two knights espied the press of wrangling warriors, and riding up, discovered the king in their midst, expostulating with the disputants. "Gentlemen," implored he, "bring me to the prince, my cousin, and cease your wrangling, for I am powerful enough to

satisfy all your claims." Dashing into the crowd, they respectfully saluted the king, and put an end to the painful scene by carrying him off to the prince, who received him with every mark of courtesy, and gave him wine and food to restore his exhausted energies.

The greater part of the Anglo-Gascon army was meanwhile spurring over the plain in pursuit of the fugitives right up to the walls of Poitiers, slaughtering as they went. The hapless rout found the gates barred, and only saved their lives by surrendering in crowds, the fury of their pursuers being checked by their greed of ransom. But death might well be sated with the blood of the fallen, for on that plain lay in the gory mire not far short of ten thousand³² victims of all ranks, three-fourths of them French. As at Crecy, a large proportion of the nobility of France had fallen, including the Dukes of Bourbon and Athenes, the Bishop of Chalons, Marshal Clermont, Geoffrey de Chagny, the Lords of Beaujeu, Ribemont, John de Lisle, Dargenton, and a score more of tried bravery, and famous lineage. The number of captives swelled beyond the possibility of exact calculation, and included, besides the king and his youngest son,

³² In one account Froissart puts the loss of the French at between 500 and 700 knights and esquires, and 6,000 of lesser rank. The Chandos Herald gives 3,000 dead, 60 counts and knights bannerets taken prisoner, and over 1,000 of lesser rank; Avesbury, 2,000 men-at-arms, over 800 others, killed, and 2,000 prisoners; Knighton's total is about the same. The Scalachronica has 3,000 men-at-arms killed, 13 counts, an archbishop, and 66 knights bannerets, and 2,000 men-at-arms captured. None of the chroniclers attempts an estimate of the English losses, which were, however, severe.

Philip, a still larger proportion of the French nobility, notably Jacques de Bourbon, the Counts of Longueville, Eu, Tancarville, Vendome, Vaudemont, Dammartin, Ventadour, Nassau, Saarbruck, the Archbishop of Sens, &c. John's three sons, the Dukes of Normandy, Anjou, and Touraine, and his brother, the Duke of Orleans, escaped with the remnants of their divisions in the direction of Chauvigny. It was a harder blow to the feudal nobility of France than even Crecy had been, and was one of the most crushing defeats ever sustained by a nation. Regarded as a feat of arms, it is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant victories in the annals of English warfare. The prince's antagonist was indeed more conspicuous for knightly ardour than for military capacity; but with such a well-equipped and vastly superior army, even royal mediocrity should have done better. After all, however, it was but half an English victory, for the Gascon portion of Prince Edward's force fought equally well with the English archers and men-at-arms, and the Gascon Lords D'Albret, Pommiers, Montferrant, Mouchidant, Condom, distinguished themselves equally with the Earls of Warwick, Oxford, Suffolk, Salisbury, John of Chandos, James Audeley, Maurice de Berkeley, Reginald de Cobham, Richard de Stafford, and many more.

To the victors and their chroniclers the victory was, of course, a providential deliverance, and it does not occur to them as strange that Providence should have been on the side of a band of cruel marauders instead of that of the defenders of home and fatherland. Let us dismiss that gruesome scene of stiff and mangled men, on which the sun set as cheerily as ever,

on that terrible 19th of September 1356, into oblivion, in the hope that, the chroniclers notwithstanding, the God of love was at least neutral on that day of brutal carnage, and that somehow, though that "how" is inscrutable to the philosopher who possesses the inconvenient appanage of a sensitive heart and conscience, love, and not brutal force, rules the world. The poor Pope, with his French sympathies, was at all events evidently not on the side of Providence, and was exposed to much indelicate raillery in consequence. Placards appeared in many places with the derisive inscription—"The Pope is French, but Jesus is English. The world may now judge which is the stronger, the Pope or Jesus."³³

In the evening the prince feasted his captive antagonist and other prisoners of high rank in the castle of Savigny from the abundance of the French camp, which yielded a rich booty, and food and drink in plenty. He insisted on serving the king with his own hands, and ascribed to him, not without reason, the palm for personal prowess on the French side. "Good cousin," asked he, with significant artlessness, "had you taken me as I, by the mercy of God, have taken you, what would you have done with me?"³⁴ John returned no answer, and the arch reference to his savage command to give no quarter admitted of none.³⁵

³³ Knighton, ii. 94.

³⁴ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 57-58.

³⁵ For the battle of Poitiers, see primarily the poem of Chandos Herald, edited for the Roxburghe Club by Coxe, and Baker (pp. 245-271), whose descriptions are evidently derived from eyewitnesses. The account of Froissart (v. 402-464), though picturesque and valuable in some details, is wanting in topographic distinctness. From this period Froissart ceases to borrow so largely from

On the morrow, after dismissing a large number of prisoners on easy terms, the prince resumed his march to Bordeaux, which he entered in the beginning of October, amid the wild enthusiasm of the citizens, Bordeaux being at this time, in sentiment as well as in allegiance, an English city. Here, on the 23rd March 1357, he concluded a truce for two years with the Duke of Normandy (regent for his father), through the mediation of Cardinals Perigord and St Vitalis, the allies of either monarch being included.⁸⁶ Still more magnificent was the reception accorded him by the city of London, on his entry with his royal prisoner on the 24th of May. England had been electrified by the tidings of the victory, and had already given ample expression to its jubilation in thanksgiving services and public rejoicings,⁸⁷ and now London was crowded to overflowing with spectators eager to look on King John, and applaud his popular captor. To judge from appearances, the rôles of the two might have been reversed, for the French monarch was mounted on a splendid white charger, and followed by his son Philip and a gorgeous band of French horsemen, who might have passed for his guard, while the prince rode at his side on a small black palfrey.⁸⁸ So vast was the

Jean le Bel, and becomes a more independent authority. Other sources which supply important details are the Scalachronica (pp. 173-176); Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 238-241; Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois; Chronique Normande, pp. 112-115; Chronicon Angliæ, pp. 35-36; Walsingham, i. 281-283, who, however, is merely a reproduction of the Chronicon Angliæ; Matteo Villani (Muratori, Scriptores), xiv. 409-418.

⁸⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 348. The truce put an end to the operations of the Duke of Lancaster in Brittany, where he had meanwhile been pushing the siege of Rennes (*Fœdera*, iii. 353).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 341. ⁸⁸ Knighton, ii. 93; *Chronicon Angliæ*, p. 37.

crowd, that it took the procession, which was headed by a company of one thousand citizens on horseback, several hours to thread its way through the packed streets from London Bridge to Westminster. Here John was received with much pomp by Edward, and lodged first at the Savoy Palace,³⁹ and afterwards at Windsor, which was to be his residence for three years to come.⁴⁰

As in the case of David of Scotland, whose fellow-prisoner he now was, his exile was made as pleasant as possible by the diversions of the chase and the tournament, to which Edward frequently invited his involuntary guests. But for the presence of his guard of English archers, there was nothing to bring to disagreeable remembrance the fact that he was a prisoner. Edward could well afford to be a generous warden. Could luck have dealt with a monarch more lavishly? Two captive kings and several smaller royalties to boot, notably his highness of Blois, who was almost a king! All three allies against him, and all three conquered in as many great pitched battles! Verily, Edward must have felt the consciousness of power as few mortals who play at the game of conquest have done. This was the climax of his career and his fortune. Only let him not tempt the gods to chastise the pride of fortune with an adverse turn of the wheel!

Negotiations with the object of transforming the truce into a durable peace then began at Westminster, Pope Innocent again proffering the services of the Cardinals Albano and St Vitalis as mediators,⁴¹

³⁹ Froissart, vi. 14.

⁴⁰ We find him, however, staying after a time at Somerton in Lincolnshire (Fœdera, iii. 414).

⁴¹ Fœdera, iii. 357.

and adding his personal exhortations from time to time in favour of their pacific efforts.⁴² There was endless confabulation over this question, which had defied so many attempts at solution, and much hurrying of messengers to and from London, Paris, and Avignon—all of course without the slightest practical consequence. Parliament, too, was summoned to the rescue in February 1358,⁴³ but Edward was a difficult man to drive a bargain with, and though he treated his captives with generous consideration, he proved a very Shylock in his determination to have his pound of flesh. If he could not have the crown of France, he would at any rate wrest from his prisoner half the kingdom as the price of his liberty. Nothing less than the restitution of the dominions formerly held by Richard I. would satisfy him. France should return to the insignificant dimensions of the earlier Capetians, should, in fact, become virtually a mere province of England! Such were the conditions to which the hapless John demeaned himself to agree. In addition to renouncing the sovereignty of Saintonge, Poitou, Angoumois, and the territories bordering on them, he gave up Maine, Touraine, and Anjou. Boulogne was thrown in with Calais and Ponthieu; Normandy, too, he was willing to restore to the sceptre of the King of England, and Brittany should recognise him as its overlord, whether John de Montfort or Charles de Blois ultimately became its recognised duke. Should it be necessary to employ force to reduce any of the ceded provinces to obedience, Edward was to be at liberty to send his armies thither, and the King of France should bear the cost

⁴² *Fœdera*, iii. 384.

⁴³ *Chronicon Angliæ*, p. 38.

at the rate of a florin per day to every knight, and half a florin to every esquire! Finally, John should pay a ransom of four millions of golden ecus, and leave two of his sons and the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon as hostages for his fidelity. It remained to be seen whether the French, even in the miserable state of civil war and anarchy to which France was now reduced, would homologate this abject collapse of their king, who, like his fellow-captive, David of Scotland, was more eager for his personal freedom than scrupulous for the national honour and integrity.⁴⁴

During the interval between the battle of Poitiers and the signing of this ignominious treaty, France had passed through the horrors of an unsuccessful attempt at revolution. The terrible disaster of 1356 had discredited the French *noblesse*, and power passed for the time into the hands of the Third Estate. The Third Estate found leaders in Etienne Marcel, the provost of the merchants of Paris, and in Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, who demanded a sweeping reform of the administration, and attempted to vest the control of the government in the States General. The attempt led to civil war, and ended in the destruction of Marcel and his partisans. The Duke of Normandy, the future Charles V., who acted as regent for his father, emerged in triumph from the struggle to assert the supremacy of the crown against the forces of reaction, but this triumph was achieved at terrible cost to France. The rising of the peasants (the Jacquerie), the ravages of the "companies of

⁴⁴ This treaty is dated 24th March 1359. It is referred to by Walsingham, i. 286, and the *Chronicon Angliæ*, p. 40. The full text was lately discovered at Poitiers and published by M. Lecointre Dupont.

brigands," as the bands of mercenaries who continued the war on their own account and devastated the country between the Loire and the Somme, were called, the seditious activity of the King of Navarre, who united the rôle of popular tribune with that of rebellious vassal, intrigued with Edward against both John and his son, and kept an army of "brigands" in his pay, reduced the country to a chaos of anarchy and bloodshed. No wonder that France drew a long breath of relief at the news that Edward and John had at last arrived at an understanding, nay, had signed a treaty of peace. There would be an end of brigandage and invasion, and this most senseless, most diabolic of wars would pass into the realm of accursed memories. The illusion was soon dispelled. On reading the treaty, which was handed to him by the Archbishop of Sens, Marshal d'Audrehem,⁴⁵ and others of the prisoners of Poitiers,—released on parole for the purpose of this unwelcome mission,—the regent was thunderstruck by the revelation of his father's craven perfidy! He determined to disown the dishonourable transaction in the name of France, and on the 25th May laid it before the States General. With one voice the deputies spurned⁴⁶ an arrangement which would have made Edward sovereign of western France from Calais to Bayonne. Rather let King John eat the bread of his brother of England all his days, if need be, than disintegrate the kingdom, and make what remained of it the mere plaything of English ambition.

In this refusal to barter away their nationality,—

⁴⁵ *Fœdera*, iii. 425.

⁴⁶ Froissart, vi. 182-187 (Lettenhove edition); cf. Matteo Villani (*Muratori*), xiv. 551.

all the more exasperating as coming on the back of the refusal of the Scots to homologate a similar arrangement,—Edward professed to see the trickiness of the French king, and found in it a plausible pretext for another invasion of France. He therefore set about making extraordinary preparations for war, and wrote the Archbishops of Canterbury and York,⁴⁷ demonstrating his grievances, and invoking once more the benefit of the prayers, processions, and sermons of the Church in the service of his Machiavelian policy. If French patriotism put a spoke in the wheel of Edward's ambition, it would require the microscope of Machiavelian perfidy to see in that an evidence of bad faith on John's part. The fact was that Edward, not John, was the trickster.⁴⁸ It was a good dodge, from the Machiavelian point of view, but it was a poor cause to pray for.

With the aid of religion and patriotism Edward got together a fleet and an army exceeding in size anything that England had ever seen. It was to be the last and the supreme effort of the war. This time there could be no doubt of it—he would return King of France *de facto* as well as *de jure*. Towards the end of October eleven hundred vessels were in readiness at Sandwich to carry the great array—one hundred thousand men, according to Villani⁴⁹—across to Calais. On the morning of the

⁴⁷ Foedera, iii. 412.

⁴⁸ Matteo Villani is very severe on Edward's perfidy: E cio bene conoscea il Re d'Inghilterra, ma con usata astuzia Inghilese, essendo certo nell'animo suo, che quello, ch' e' domandava fare non si potea, per potere calonniare il Re di Francia di rottura di pace e di fede, &c. (Muratori, xiv. 545).

⁴⁹ p. 577. From this number deduct the advance parties sent over under the Duke of Lancaster, numbering, according to Villani, 21,500 men.

28th, Edward embarked in the "La Philip,"⁵⁰ with the Prince of Wales, and his three younger sons, Lionel, John, and Edmund (leaving the youngest, Thomas of Woodstock, as regent). Before evening he was at Calais,⁵¹ whither the Duke of Lancaster, with the advance guard, had preceded him, to keep in countenance the large number of German and Flemish mercenaries who had assembled there as early as August, and were getting impatient at the delay.⁵² In order to recoup them for the loss incurred in waiting, Lancaster made a preliminary raid into Artois as far as the valley of the Somme, and laid unsuccessful siege to Dray.⁵³ He was returning to Calais in the beginning of November when he encountered the army of Edward some leagues from the town, already on the march southwards. "So great was the multitude of armed men," says Froissart, "that the whole country was covered with them, and so richly adorned and equipped were they, that it was a marvel and a delight to see their glittering arms, their waving banners, and their waggons moving forward in order at a slow pace."⁵⁴ The first division, or "battle," under the Constable, the Earl of March, was preceded by the advance guard, 600 men-at-arms and 1,000 archers strong. Then came the king's "battle" of 3,000 men-at-arms, and 5,000 archers, all on horseback. Next the baggage waggons, several thousands in number,⁵⁵ preceded by 500 men bearing axes and shovels, wherewith to cleave the way, and extending for two

⁵⁰ *Fœdera*, iii. 452.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, iii. 453.

⁵² Froissart, vi. 202-204.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vi. 204-208; cf. *Scalachronica*, p. 187.

⁵⁴ vi. 214.

⁵⁵ Froissart says 6,000! Walsingham, 1,000.

leagues! Lastly, the "battle" of the prince, consisting of 2,500 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 4,000 light troops. Making allowance for the proportional strength of the first division, which Froissart forgets to compute, and which Edward now placed under the command of Lancaster,⁵⁶ the whole army would not greatly exceed 30,000 men. Whatever its exact numbers,⁵⁷ he deemed it amply sufficient for the purpose (France being apparently at his mercy), and dismissed such of the foreign mercenaries as would not consent to serve without wages and take their chance of a share of the plunder.

On this occasion, however, there was no rich country to plunder. Northern France was one vast Sahara of desolation. The untilled fields, the ruined villages, from which the miserable remnant of starving inhabitants had fled at the news of his approach, told the melancholy tale of the miseries of the previous three years. Was there no feeling of compassion or compunction in the heart of the ambitious conqueror, who had sacrificed hundreds of thousands to his egotistic schemes of aggression? Evidently not, for the army held steadily, if slowly, forward, through this wilderness, subsisting for once from its own commissariat. Edward had taken the precaution to bring supplies with him this time, with hand mills to grind his corn and ovens to bake it, and falcons and dogs for the chase, and small portable boats for fishing, and supplemented them by drawing on the

⁵⁶ *Chronicon Angliæ*, p. 40; Walsingham, i. 287; Froissart, vi. 257.

⁵⁷ That his army was very formidable is evidenced by the *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, p. 100, Edouart le roy d'Angleterre et le prince, etc., a tres grant host passerent la mer.

resources of Hainault. Nevertheless, the contents of his baggage waggons were soon exhausted, and the army suffered not a little from short rations and the wet weather, as it moved forward at the rate of three leagues a day.⁵⁸ There was no attempt at resistance, the inhabitants having shut themselves up in the fortified towns, and Edward did not loiter in the effort to reduce them. His objective was Reims, the sacred city of the French monarchy, where he would assume the crown of Clovis, and attain the goal of his ambition!⁵⁹ From famine-stricken Artois he passed into Cambresis, which, being a fief of the empire, had not suffered from the ravages of the brigands, and offered a welcome abundance for a few days to the starving army. He did not scruple to help himself liberally by the way, reminding the Bishop of Cambrai, who remonstrated, of the hostility which his predecessor had shown to his expedition thitherwards twenty years before, by way of palliation. From Cambresis he held on south-eastwards, through Vermandois into Champagne, crossing the Upper Somme, the Oise, and the Aisne without hindrance, as far as Reims, which he reached about the middle of December. To reduce Reims was, in a way, to conquer France, for at Reims the kings of the Franks had been anointed from the sacred amphora since the days of Clovis. He encamped in the villages surrounding the city,

⁵⁸ Froissart, vi. 219-225. To judge from Froissart, the English army marched in a solid body, but the *Scalachronica* says that its three divisions took different routes, and converged at Reims, Edward going by Arras and Cambrai, the prince by St. Quentin, Lancaster between them (pp. 187-188).

⁵⁹ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 297, *Ut se ibi faceret coronari in regem Franciæ.*

in the hope of starving it into surrender. His own quarters were at St Bâle, those of the Prince of Wales at St Thierry. But Reims was surrounded by stout ramparts, and the commander of the garrison, Gaucher de Chatillon, was resolved to hold them to the death, rather than surrender the sacred city of France to the invaders. There Edward sat for five weeks in the cold and the pouring rain, much pinched for supplies, while sending out detachments to storm the fortresses in the neighbourhood, but not hazarding an assault.⁶⁰ It was a bad season to attempt to play the game of starvation with an army which itself suffered severely from lack of supplies, and ere long it appeared that instead of starving the garrison into surrender, he would himself be starved into raising the siege. Foraging parties scoured the country towards Laon, Chalons, Soissons, Rethel, only to find that the brigand hordes which had ravaged the beautiful plain of Champagne, had left little or nothing to pillage. And still it poured, and the horses, for which there was little shelter and still less forage, suffered terribly from exposure. Heaven seemed to conspire with the resolute defenders of the sacred city to defeat the ambition of the would-be successor of Clovis, who might be a great strategist, but had not learned the art of maintaining an adequate commissariat. By the middle of January,

⁶⁰ Froissart says distinctly that he did not attempt an assault. On the other hand, the *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois* (pp. 105-106) says that his army made an attack in three battles, which lasted a whole day, but was repulsed. The plan of the prince, to effect an entrance by filling up the ditches with wood, was frustrated by the besieged, who set fire to the wood. The expedient of assaulting the walls by means of two large wooden towers was equally futile.

Edward saw his dream of a second coronation at Reims vanish into illusion, and struck his dripping tents and marched off southwards to Chalons. Burgundy would yield an abundance of good wine and other booty, Burgundy having hitherto suffered less than Champagne from the brigand tribe,⁶¹ and for a starving army fertile Burgundy was more to the purpose than the crown of Clovis. From Chalons south-eastwards to Bar-le-Duc, and then back south-westwards to Troyes, moved the hungry host, and still no hope of plunder amid these wasted Champagne fields and vineyards. It is a sorry business on which this great array of English chivalry has come, this of hunting east and west for something to eat and drink, while the crown of Clovis has vanished like the mirage. At Tonnerre, which was taken by assault, it at last struck a vein of plenty, in the form of "three thousand pieces of wine," and here there was a halt of five days "for the sake of these good wines." Flavigny, likewise, which was captured by John de Herleston, yielded a large stock of provisions. Plenty of game and fish, too, in the country thereabouts, to tempt to indulgence in the English sport of hawking and fishing, on which Edward had counted, as we have seen. The army recovered its spirits, in prospect of the pillage of Burgundy, to prevent which the duke made haste to send representatives to Guillon, to buy immunity with an offer of 200,000 moutons d'or.⁶² This offer Edward accepted, and bent westwards towards the capital.

While he was on the march between Reims and

⁶¹ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, p. 101.

⁶² *Fœdera*, iii. 473 (10th March 1560).

Paris, a French fleet sailed from St. Vallery to attempt the rescue of King John. John was then staying at Somerton Castle in Lincoln, and the plan was to land on the Lincolnshire coast and carry him off. The time seemed favourable for an invasion. In the absence of the English army in the heart of France, the country was reputed to be quite defenceless. Edward, however, had taken the precaution of holding the levies of the counties in readiness for such an emergency, and the English Government had, besides, got timely notice of the destination of the French fleet, and hurriedly removed John to Berkhamstead in the beginning of March, and thence to the Tower, where he arrived at the end of that month.⁶³ Instead of attempting the rescue of the king, Jean de Neuville made a descent at Rye in the middle of March,⁶⁴ marched to Winchelsea, put the garrison, which attempted to stop his advance, to flight, burned the town, and slaughtered many of the inhabitants. The invaders did not respect even the sanctity of the church, in which the townspeople sought refuge, but butchered the men, and violated the women in the presence of the very altar. The chronicler has preserved one terrible scene of atrocious brutality. Among those who sought the sanctuary of the sacred building was a young woman of great beauty, who was so shamefully abused by these sensual fiends that she died on the spot. The men of the southern counties rushed to arms to repel the invaders, who, having given Englishmen a taste of the sufferings so long inflicted by them on France, made off at their approach across the Channel, followed shortly after by an English fleet, which paid

⁶³ *Fœdera*, iii. 470 and 475.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, iii. 476.

back this insult by the capture and devastation of Caux.⁶⁵

The news of this descent, coming on the back of the failure at Reims, was a bitter dose for Edward, and in his anger he swore to be avenged on Paris itself. To Paris, therefore, he directed his march, wasting the country *en route* along the Yonne and the Seine. To enter Paris in triumph would be ample solace for the failure of the coronation scheme, as well as a stinging reply to the sack of Winchelsea. Arrived at Bourg-la-Reine, two leagues from the capital; about the middle of April, he sent heralds to summon the Duke of Normandy to battle. The duke's situation was desperate in the extreme. The civil war which had for a time been checked by the treaty of Melun (August 1359), with the King of Navarre, had broken out anew, Navarre having gathered a fresh army in Normandy to co-operate with Edward in the conquest of France. Never apparently had France been so near to doom, with a powerful English army at the gates of the capital, and the whole country the helpless prey of the ravager. Happily the patriotism of Marcel had provided Paris with stout defences, and the duke could at least hope to hold the capital, whatever became of the country. Edward sent Walter de Manny to essay a skirmish with the garrison. The result was not encouraging, and on the morrow he moved off south-westwards towards Montlery and Chartres, burning and pillaging by the way.⁶⁶ On

⁶⁵ Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 110-113; cf. Chronicon Angliæ, pp. 40-42; and Continuator de G. de Nangis ii. 298-299.

⁶⁶ Multis tamen fortalitiis, per eos occupatis, et aliis disruptis et villis deprædatis similiter et crematis (Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 308).

the march thither the army was overtaken by a terrible storm of thunder and hail, which killed a large number of men and horses, and threw it into a panic. Behold, cried the stricken host, the judgment of God for our sins! This disaster seems to have brought home to the conscience of Edward the crime of sacrificing the happiness of multitudes to his heartless ambition, and in this chastened mood the emissaries of the duke found him at Chartres. The duke had made several attempts to resume the negotiations whose failure had set Edward on the warpath. His efforts had been persistently seconded by the Pope, whose legate, the Abbé de Clugny, had been busily jogging between the belligerents these two months past. Edward had frustrated all chance of agreement by insisting on the impossible terms which he had wrested from his captive. His inability to reduce Paris and Reims, and the difficulty of feeding his army,⁶⁷ softened his stubbornness somewhat, and he now condescended to meet his antagonist in a more conciliatory spirit. The negotiations commenced at Bretigny, a few leagues from Chartres, between the Abbot of Clugny, the Bishop of Beauvais, the Count of Tancarville, Marshal Boucicaut, and other representatives of the Duke of Normandy, on the one hand; and the Duke of Lancaster, the Earls of Northampton, Warwick, Stafford, Salisbury, Walter de Manny, &c., on behalf of Edward, culminated at length on the 8th May in the celebrated treaty of Bretigny. By this treaty the Duke of Normandy, as regent of France, recognised the sovereign right of Edward to Guienne and Gascony, including the counties or

⁶⁷ Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, p. 117.

territories of Poitiers, Saintonge, Agen, Perigord, Limousin, Caour, Bigorre, Gaure, Angoulême, Rodeis, Rouerge. All French magnates holding lands in these counties to do homage for them to the King of England. Further, the King of France renounced all his rights to Monstreuil, Ponthieu, and Calais, in favour of Edward. The treaty contains, too, numerous stipulations intended to prevent the possibility of future friction between the two sovereigns on the score of ancient rights and customs. The renunciation agreed to by the régent was absolute in respect of all past or present feudal relations. The jurisdiction of the English king was henceforth to be supreme within the ceded territories, as well as those over which the monarchs of France had been recognised as overlords. On the other hand, Edward waived in express terms all pretensions to the crown and kingdom of France, and all claims to feudal rights over Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, Brittany, Flanders. As in the case of the Scots, Edward squeezed the French hard in the matter of the ransom of their captive king. Three million golden ecus—not a penny less—was his ultimatum, the first instalment of six hundred thousand to be paid at Calais within four months after the arrival of King John there, and four hundred thousand annually till the whole sum should be exhausted. John to remain at Calais for four months at his own charges till the stipulated conditions were fulfilled, and surrender La Rochelle as security for the payment of his ransom. A large number of hostages, in addition to those taken at the battle of Poitiers, and including John's two sons, the Dukes of Anjou and Berri, the Dukes of Bourbon and Orleans, the

Counts of Alençon and Blois, and other nobles of high rank, as well as citizens of the chief towns of France, to be surrendered to Edward as guarantees of good faith. The question of the succession to the Duchy of Brittany was reserved to the arbitration of the two monarchs, John meanwhile undertaking to reinstate John de Montfort in his rights as Count of Montfort, and both claimants being bound to accept their decision on pain of compulsion. Brittany in any case was recognised as a fief of the French crown. John further to re-establish Philip of Navarre and his adherents in all their possessions, and to assure amnesty to all the adherents of either side during the war. Alliance and friendship to exist henceforth between the two kingdoms. To this end John agreed to renounce his alliance with the Scots against England, and Edward his alliance with the Flemings against France. Liberty of study at French and English universities was guaranteed to the subjects of both, and both potentates undertook to enforce the sentences of the Pope. All which the Duke of Normandy, on behalf of his father, the Earl of Stafford, Walter de Manny, Reginald de Cobham, Roger de Beauchamp, on behalf of Edward, swore to observe for evermore in the presence of the said negotiators, and thus to ensure to Europe the blessings of millennial peace.⁶⁸

The treaty signed and sworn, Edward took

⁶⁸ The treaty is given in full in *Fœdera*, iii. 487, *et seq.* For this expedition and the negotiations, see Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 296-313; Froissart, vi. 202-292; *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 100-117; *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 165-202; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 149-152; *Mat. Villani* (Muratori), xiv. 577-578, 587-588, 598-600, 611-614; *Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 40-49; *Walsingham*, i. 286-295; *Scalachronica*, pp. 186-196.

ship at Honfleur for Rye, where he arrived on the 18th May,⁶⁹ his army marching meanwhile peaceably northwards to Calais. "Good brother of France," said he to John, embracing him in the palace at Westminster, "you and I are now, thank God, of good accord."⁷⁰ For the next six weeks there were feasting and quaffing of bumpers in honour of the eternal friendship sworn at Bretigny and Paris; and then in the beginning of July, Edward let his captive out of the cage, splendidly equipped for his journey to Calais in the midst of a gorgeous cavalcade, led by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Lancaster.

John was only half free as yet, however, and in accordance with the agreement he put in four months of quasi-captivity at Calais until the first instalment of his ransom should be paid. How to raise the sum of 600,000 moutons d'or was a poser in the miserably reduced state of France. Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan, came to the rescue with the offer of 600,000 florins in return for the hand of Isabella, John's third daughter. Necessity forced him to barter his daughter in this sordid fashion to the ambition of a petty Italian potentate, and the difficulty of paying the first instalment was surmounted in a manner very galling to French pride.

Edward followed his good brother to Calais in the beginning of October to receive this large sum on account, and ratify the treaty with some slight variations in the articles.⁷¹ John then set forward on his journey to Paris. He arrived on the 13th December, amid the jubilation of the citizens, whose enthusiasm

⁶⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 494.

⁷⁰ *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, p. 119.

⁷¹ *Fœdera*, iii. 514, 118.

was intensified by liberal draughts from the wine fountains that ran in honour of the occasion.⁷² Both kings honestly meant what they said for once, for further conflict was in the meantime out of the question, in the distracted and ruined state of France, and necessity sometimes makes even kings speak *ex officio* the truth to each other. The French, who were to be transformed into Englishmen against their will, were persuaded to recognise the sovereignty of Edward, and reluctantly submitted. "Our lips shall be English, our hearts never," bitterly protested the men of La Rochelle, who held out for several months against the decree that bartered their French birthright by a stroke of the pen.⁷³ The French garrisons gave up the towns and castles which the treaty had transferred to Edward. Similarly the English garrisons evacuated the stipulated places conquered during the war, but John of Chandos, whom Edward appointed his lieutenant⁷⁴ in France, had to bring force to bear on the bands of lawless English and German mercenaries in Edward's service, who continued to live by plunder in spite of the treaty.⁷⁵

Peace had come none too soon, for to the misery and sombre imagination of the time, the end of the world was at hand. Those gloomy forebodings found expression in numerous prophecies, notably in those of the poor monk, Jean de la Roche-Taillade, whom the Pope had clapped into prison at Avignon for his outspoken denunciations of both priest and

⁷² Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, p. 122.

⁷³ Froissart, vi. 326.

⁷⁴ Fœdera, iii. 555 (20th January 1561).

⁷⁵ Ibid., iii. 630; Froissart, vi. 327.

prince. The austere monk looked at the wretched world of his time in the light of the Apocalypse, and no wonder that the shadow of coming antichrist should throw its gloomy trail over the papal city itself. The pride and luxury of the higher ecclesiastical orders, the oppression of the people by quarrelsome and ambitious potentates, were too suggestive of coming judgment to need much of the gift of prophecy to interpret them. The outraged heart and conscience of humanity could stand the devilries of ambitious kings no longer, and saved its belief in Providence and Scripture—fast becoming an illusion, amidst the miseries of that distracted world—by its foreboding of judgment about to come. If it could not depose its kings, it could at least consign them by anticipation to the bottomless pit. Let the potentates of this world beware, and the Church put on sackcloth for its sins. Antichrist is on the threshold: from the Sicilian Sea shall come the beast of the Apocalypse. Then shall the golden age appear under a Pope who shall not be a cardinal, and whose residence shall be neither Avignon, nor Rome, but Jerusalem. No wonder the Pope kept our would-be Dante muzzled in his dungeon. The world had at least the satisfaction of seeing in his gloomy lucubrations the expression of its antagonism to the age in which it had the misfortune to be born.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ For notice of Jean de la Roche-Taillade and his prophecies, see Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 234-237.

CHAPTER XIX.

DOMESTIC LEGISLATION AND THE SPANISH EXPEDITION (1361-1368).

PARLIAMENT met on the 24th January 1361 to confirm the treaty, and thus mark its satisfaction at the advantageous termination of the long conflict. The ceremony was imposing. Mass having been said by Archbishop Islip in the presence of the king, his sons, and the assembled orders, each member, the archbishop leading, swore on the holy sacrament to observe its provisions, and to preserve peace between the two countries.¹ This solemn proceeding inaugurated a period of important parliamentary activity, which lasted throughout the remainder of Edward's reign, and beyond. During the previous six years, Parliament had been practically quiescent.² Henceforth there is abundant evidence, in the increasing amount of useful legislation, of the growing power of the Commons, who became ever more alert in their efforts to control the administration of king and council. During the session of 1362, which lasted from the 13th October to the 17th November, the Commons made a dead set against the abuse of purveyance. The people had, not without reason, come to look upon the

¹ *Chronicon Angliæ*, f. p. 49.

² There were sessions in 1357, 1358, 1360, but the official records have been lost. They seem to have been concerned chiefly with financial business.

officials entrusted with the duty of provisioning the royal household, when *en voyage*, as licensed thieves. The approach of the royal cavalcade was the signal for every housewife to look to her poultry and her larder. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, in common with the peasant, trembled for his stud when the king, or the queen, or any member of the royal family, went a-travelling. These robbers, he complained in a letter to Edward, continued to help themselves without payment, under pretext of the royal service, in spite of parliamentary regulation. In consequence thereof, the people cursed the mischance that brought the king their way, and the honest archbishop did not mince words in apprising his majesty of the fact.³ The thing had become a scandal, derogatory to the royal dignity as well as intolerable to the lieges, and Edward had the good sense to listen to the remonstrances of the Commons, and to enact that henceforth all articles requisitioned for the royal use should invariably be paid for at current prices.⁴ Another hardship against which the Commons had long petitioned—the arbitrary and oppressive exaction on wool exported—was next swept away, and the king consented not merely to reduce the ordinary wool tax to the customary rate of half a mark, but to refrain from levying any charge, whether granted by the merchants or others, without the assent of Parliament.⁵ The concession of this long-standing demand tended

³ The letter is quoted by Stubbs from a MS. in the Bodleian Library, Constitutional History, ii. 404.

⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 269-270; Statutes, i. 371. The right was limited to the king, queen, and their eldest son. The name of purveyor was changed to that of buyer, &c.

⁵ Rot. Par., ii. 271; Statutes, i. 374.

to make Parliament the arbiter of the king's policy as well as the bulwark against arbitrary power, and though Edward might, nay did, subsequently attempt to evade the obligation, the statute remained as a monument of the indubitable right of the legislature to refuse to submit to illegal taxes.⁶ The same determination to preserve a firm hold on the administration is observable in the petition for an annual session, and in the protests against illegal imprisonment. Another demand for the removal of a grievance connected with the procedure of the Law Courts is significant of the growth of the national spirit. The official language was still French, but French had never been the mother tongue of Englishmen, and was becoming more and more a mere relic of the Norman conquest. The higher classes on both sides of the Channel still spoke the same language, but English had asserted its vitality as the language of the mass, and as the language of the new literature, in which the national spirit was seeking expression. The Commons, therefore, petitioned, and Edward consented, that trials in Court should henceforth be conducted in English.⁷ It is remarkable that at a time when Edward was striving to conquer France, the national spirit should have shown itself so antagonistic to the French conquest of England, three hundred years before. This fact alone might have convinced him

⁶ Et q̄ nul subside, n'autre charge soit mis ne grante sur les Leines par les marchantz ne p̄ nul autre desoreenavant saunz assent du Parlement (Rot. Par., ii. 271).

⁷ Que toutes Plees . . . soient pledez et monstrez en la langue Engleise (Rot. Par., ii. 273). French continued to be the language of the Law Courts, however, for a long period after this enactment.

of the futility of seeking to unite the crown of England, in which the national spirit was becoming so assertive, with that of France which was becoming equally conscious of its nationality, and had suffered so much in its defence. The victories won by English arms, while they quickened the English national spirit, had in reality been so many defeats, as far as Edward's ultimate purpose was concerned. They only made the irremediable separation between the two peoples deeper. If Norman French had been the language of England, history might have taken another turn, though the example of Scotland was proving that even identity of language can never make conquest palatable to a high-spirited people. Edward's powers of observation as well as his political insight were apparently not of the first order.

Parliament rewarded the liberal compliance of the sovereign by renewing the subsidy on wool, wool-fells, and leather for three years.⁸ It gave its sanction to the enhanced dignities which Edward now conferred on his younger sons. Lionel, who was already Duke of Ulster, was created Duke of Clarence, John of Ghent, Duke of Lancaster, in succession to his father-in-law, who died in March 1361, and Edmund, Earl of Cambridge. Three months before, he had conferred the Duchy of Aquitaine on the Prince of Wales,⁹ who in the previous year had become the husband of Joanna, Countess of Kent, and widow of Thomas de Holland.¹⁰ These honours were more

⁸ Rot. Par., ii. 273.

⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 667 (19th July). The prince did homage to his father for Aquitaine, and undertook to pay an ounce of gold annually in recognition of his supremacy (*ibid.*, iii. 668).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, iii. 626.

than the mere titles by which the sons of the sovereign are decorated in modern times, but which confer no territorial power. They carried with them large domains, for Edward took care to marry his sons (with the exception of the Prince of Wales, whose wooing was a real love affair, much to his father's chagrin) to wealthy heiresses. Lionel was the husband of the daughter of Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, the heiress of a large part of the estates of the Earls of Gloucester and Hertford; John of Ghent, of Blanche of Lancaster, who inherited those of Earl Thomas. In thus increasing the territorial power of his children, he was unwittingly leaving to posterity a legacy of dissension and conflicting ambition, which were to desolate England with cruel war in the following century. In his domestic, as in his foreign policy, events were to prove his statecraft singularly shortsighted.

In the following session¹¹ (6th October to 3rd November 1363) we light on some curious sumptuary legislation. In the opinion of Parliament, one of the ends of government was to guarantee cheap food. Let the king, therefore, appoint justices to control prices, and see to it that no provision dealer charge more than from three to four deniers for a capon, two for a fowl, and one for a chicken.¹² To the same end, no grocer, or guild of grocers, ought to be allowed to deal in all manner of merchandise, and raise prices by agreement among themselves, to the impoverishment of the people and their own unfair enrichment. Ordained, therefore, in response to a

¹¹ The speech of the chancellor, the Bishop of Ely, was delivered on this occasion in English.

¹² Rot. Par., ii. 277.

petition on this subject, that each merchant shall be at liberty to deal only in one species of goods.¹³ Similarly, artisans may only exercise one craft, and are likewise placed under official supervision. Parliament is, too, much exercised over the delinquencies of the lieges in the matter of clothes and eatables. Each class, it seems, is aping the habiliments of that above it, apprentices donning the garb of artisans, artisans that of valets, valets that of esquires, esquires that of knights, clerics that of lords, with the result that cloth and fur had unreasonably risen in price. The clothes mania was clearly dangerous to society, for society, then as now, is very much a matter of clothes. Wherefore every one shall be bound to wear the garments of his station, and be, moreover, content with the fare pertaining thereto. For domestic servants and artisans, flesh or fish but once a day; at other meals, milk, cheese, butter, &c. Similar regulations for the higher classes, according to the value of their incomes. Finally, agricultural labourers are to be content with homely russet, and eat and drink in accordance with use and wont, and even then "not excessively."¹⁴ Furthermore, the statute of 1353, regulating the price of wine, was reinforced. The wine merchants trading with Bordeaux should obtain only a reasonable profit, the mayor and constable of Bordeaux being bound to certify at what price they bought the wine, and the chancellor to regulate accordingly the price at which it was to be sold at English ports.¹⁵

This experiment in thrift by Act of Parliament

¹³ Rot. Par., ii. 277-278.

¹⁴ Ibid., ii. 278-279.

¹⁵ Ibid., ii. 279. The ordinances based on these petitions are given in the *ibid.*, ii. 280-282.

did not yield altogether satisfactory results. In the following session (20th January to 28th February 1365), the Commons, after renewing the wool subsidy for another three years,¹⁶ are found petitioning for the abrogation of these ordinances. Provisions and wearing apparel had only increased in price by the restrictions imposed on competitive trading. Wherefore the Commons pray "that every merchant may be allowed to trade in all manner of goods if he so pleases, and that all men, of whatsoever state, may henceforth freely use their own discretion in matters of food and apparel."¹⁷ The clause in the Ordinance of the Staple (since 1362 fixed at Calais), which prohibited the export of wool, leather, and skins by English merchants, under pain of forfeiture of life and property, was also repealed as detrimental to the wool trade. All prohibitive restrictions against the sale of foreign merchandise were at the same time removed, on the principle, which experience had vindicated, that the less restraint on the free exchange of commodities the better for the English producer and consumer.

At the request of the king, the Lords and Commons gave their unanimous assent to a series of ordinances prohibiting anew, under severe penalties, the abuse of provisions and the submission of causes cognisable by the Royal Courts to the judgment of the Pope.¹⁸ Thus for the third time during the reign, we observe a determined revolt against the papal jurisdiction, on the plea of the dignity of the crown,

¹⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 285.

¹⁷ Ibid., ii. 286.

¹⁸ Ibid., ii. 283-285. The prelates qualified their assent with the reservation that it should not be prejudicial to the rights and dignity of their order.

the interest of religion, and the weal of the realm, which were deemed incompatible with obedience to a foreign ecclesiastical overlordship over the nation. Nay, the Popes even claimed to be lords superior of the English crown, in virtue of the homage extorted from King John, and next year (session 1366, 4th to 12th May) the anti-papal feeling was intensified by a communication from the king that the Pope was about to raise a process against him for the recovery of the arrears¹⁹ of the annual tribute of one thousand marks, which John had agreed to pay in recognition of this vassalage. The bare mention of homage was sufficient to stir the national pride into an explicit denial of any such claim. Neither King John, nor any other, had the right to subject the crown and kingdom of England to a foreign jurisdiction, without the assent²⁰ of the barons, and in violation of his coronation oath. Should the Pope attempt to insist on such a preposterous claim, the Lords and Commons would resist it with all their might.²¹ Even Peter's pence should not be paid till his Holiness learned what was due to an English king and the English people.²² After this decisive assertion of the rights of peoples, it is ridiculous to assert, as some have done, that Englishmen, in their covetous yearnings to rob Scotland of its independence, could not be expected to see the force of the contention of the Scots that they owed no obligation of vassalage to an English king, and that their nationality was at

¹⁹ It had not been paid since 1333.

²⁰ *Qe le dit roi Johan ne nul autre purra mettre lui ne son Roialme ne son People en tiele subjection saunz assent et accorde de eux* (Rot. Par., ii. 290).

²¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 289-290.

²² Barnes' History of Edward III., p. 670.

least as worthy of respect and autonomy as that of their more powerful neighbours.

Domestic affairs still form the burden of the petitions of the Commons in the next session (1st to 21st May 1368), in which the subsidy on wool, &c., was continued for two years.²³ The only point in the monotonous recital which merits notice is the complaint of the continued labour difficulty. There had been a return of the plague in 1361 in England as well as France. The visitation lasted from August of that year to the following May, and once more smote the prosperity, which, as in 1348-1349, accrued from the temporary cessation of the struggle with France. In spite of the statute of 1351, the labourers took advantage of the situation to improve their position. According to Parliament, their demands were "so excessive and outrageous" as to necessitate the re-enactment of the statute, and poor Hodge saw his efforts to apply the law of supply and demand in his own interest once more thwarted by the legislature in the interests of his master.²⁴

This happy interval of peace, during which king and Parliament are found working harmoniously and patriotically for the general good, unfortunately came to an end in 1369, when the bugbear of foreign policy again formed the exclusive theme of the speech of the chancellor, the Bishop of Winchester. The horizon across the Channel, particularly towards Guienne, was again black with war clouds, ominous this time not of victory, but of disaster. Nemesis was at hand, and the records of the last eight years of Edward's reign are sombre reading, as the tide of success turns in favour of France

²³ Rot. Par., ii. 295.

²⁴ Ibid., ii. 296.

at last, and the gains of a reckless and heartless warfare are lost one after another, and the broken warrior sinks into the grave under the shock of defeat and the sense of failure. It is a tragic story—the story of disaster abroad, of strife at home—unwelcome to patriotic feeling—prelude of many tragedies to come, yet replete with a certain grim teaching to those who disbelieve in policies of bellicose ambition, and see in history—sometimes at least—the inexorable judge and avenger of wrongdoing. Policies of ambition and violence succeed only till the reaction which they tend to incite, in favour of justice and right, has gathered the force sufficient to vindicate them. “As a man sows, so shall he reap,” is the eternal law applicable to unscrupulous politicians equally with humbler individuals.

We must now turn back for a brief space to follow the thread of events that brought Edward and his Parliament face to face with the renewal of the war.

The heavy ransom payable to Edward was a millstone round the neck of the French king. In the wasted state of France it was a sheer impossibility to raise the annual instalment of four hundred thousand *ecus*. John became liable, too, for the payment of the residue of the sum owing by the Duke of Burgundy on his death in November 1361, without direct male heirs. The duchy fell to the French crown, and John, who gave it to his son Philip,²⁵ had to take its debts into the bargain. The payments came in dribbles. He was obliged to plead poverty in palliation of his remissness, and in

²⁵ *Fœdera*, iii. 708 (6th September 1363).

April 1362 sent the Abbé de Clugny, now cardinal, to beg a reduction of his ransom. Edward was a hard creditor, and held him to his bargain.²⁶ He might well have done honour to his own reputation in this year of jubilee (he was now fifty years of age, and the event was made the occasion of public rejoicing) by including such an act of generosity among the favours which he bestowed on all delinquents, political as well as criminal, in celebration of it.²⁷ But it was too much in his interest to keep his brother of France in his bankrupt state for him to lighten his burden. John's situation was now in truth desperate enough. The King of Navarre, who had made his peace, was again threatening civil war in vindication of his claim to the Duchy of Burgundy. In Champagne, Burgundy, and other provinces the brigand "companies" renewed their depredations,²⁸ and successfully defied every effort to hunt them down, notably at Brignais, where the royal army, under Jacques de Bourbon, was defeated, and its commander killed (6th April 1362). The pestilence was again following its old track throughout Europe with terrible effects. King John, weary of the thankless and harassing task of government, bethought him of seeking consolation and distraction from his sorrows in a crusade to the Holy Land. His pious resolve was strengthened during a visit to Avignon in the winter and spring of 1363, where he found a new Pope, Urban V., Guillaume Grimoard, who (Innocent having died on the 12th September 1362) was hoisted from the insignificant dignity of Abbé of St Victor de Marseilles to that of

²⁶ Chron. Angliæ, p. 51.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁸ Froissart, vi. 326-345; Chron. Angliæ, p. 50.

Pope, as the result of a deadlock in the conclave. To Avignon, too, came the King of Cyprus, fresh from his triumphs over the infidel, and zealous in his advocacy of a new crusade. John actually took the cross, along with Waldemar, King of Denmark, who joined him at Avignon, with the firm determination to set out the following year to deliver the Saviour's tomb, and at the same time draw the brigand swarms away from France. The King of Cyprus went the round of the Western Courts to organise the holy expedition, but the crusading fever was no longer infectious.²⁹ Edward and the rest of them excused themselves with the plea of the pressing demands of their earthly affairs, and John's entanglements were too hopeless to permit him to extricate himself in pursuit of his romantic design. Instead of going to Jerusalem as brigand leader and knight-errant of a decadent Church, he was fain to cross the Channel in the beginning of January 1364, to essay personally the reduction of his ransom, and to take the place of his runaway son, the Duke of Anjou.³⁰

About a year before — in November 1362 — Edward had agreed to release the Dukes of Anjou, Berri, Orleans, and Bourbon pending the full payment of the ransom of the French monarch, in return for the transference to him of the lordship of Belleville and other towns and territories, and a sum of two hundred thousand florins. In default of the observance of these conditions, the princes were to return to captivity in the following Novem-

²⁹ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 330-331; *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 125-129.

³⁰ *Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 134-135.

ber.³¹ John assented to the arrangement,³² and in May 1363 the four dukes (the four "lilies," as they were called in allusion to the fleur-de-lys) were allowed to cross over to Calais to await the fulfilment of the conditions of their release. The prospect of finding the necessary sum was hopeless, however, and the Duke of Anjou, who had obtained Edward's sanction to go on pilgrimage to Boulogne, yielding to the entreaties of his wife, violated his oath, and bolted to the castle of Guise. He turned a deaf ear to the exhortations of his father to return to Calais, and the hapless John saw no other expedient but to cross over and surrender himself in his stead.³³ Scandal adds that there was a lady or ladies in the affair to induce the sorry monarch to this extraordinary act, in spite of the supplications of his council. Accompanied by a magnificent suite—among them the young Lord of Couci,³⁴ who danced and sang to perfection "when his turn came"—, he was received with effusive honour, and lodged in his old quarters at the Savoy Palace. Edward kept him in countenance with grand dinners and suppers, in which the Kings of Scotland and Denmark took part, and with specious promises of a speedy release and a united crusade. Three months passed, however, and no decision could be wrung out of John's wary host, until death at last stepped in and put an end to the sorrows of the

³¹ See *Fœdera*, iii. 681, for these and other conditions of the treaty.

³² *Ibid.*, iii. 694.

³³ Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 333.

³⁴ He became the following year the husband of Edward's eldest daughter, Isabella, and Earl of Bedford.

heart-broken exile (8th April 1364³⁵). His body was embalmed, and conveyed with much ceremony to France to be interred at St Denis.

His eldest son, the Duke of Normandy, was consecrated at Reims as Charles V. on the 19th May. Three days before the Breton captain, Bertrand du Guesclin, who now appears on the scene as the champion of French nationality, won the victory of Cocherel over the Captal de Buch, the King of Navarre's general, Navarre having taken advantage of John's absence to prosecute his claim to Burgundy by force.³⁶ An accession inaugurated by a victory was a good omen of the turn of fortune in favour of France.

These two men—Charles V. and Du Guesclin—who were so closely associated in their efforts to recover lost ground for France, were singularly unlike in character and tastes. Strange as it may seem in this tragic age, Charles had imbibed a deep love of study and virtue. His boon companion was the celebrated Italian savant and astrologer, Thomas de Pisa, the scientific prodigy of the age, whom he lured to Paris by the offer of a large pension. After the official labours of the day, he devoted a few hours to the study of history, theology, science, philosophy.³⁷ A philosopher king, a Christian Marcus Aurelius, in an age of barbarous violence, is indeed

³⁵ Froissart, vi. 409-411; Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 142-143.

³⁶ Continuator de G. de Nangis, ii. 235-238; Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 145-147; Froissart, vi. 411-446.

³⁷ Christine de Pisan, *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V.*, in *Petitot's Collection*, v. 280. The panegyrist of Charles was a daughter of Thomas de Pisa, and the most accomplished woman of the fourteenth century.

a miracle. While France was in danger of being submerged in the abyss of misery and anarchy, her king found time to collect some coveted literary treasure of classic antiquity or mediæval lore for his library in the Louvre, or examine the plan of some new castle or church, or search out and reward some deserving scholar.³⁸ Nor is it less novel in a century of crass injustice to find a monarch who would arrest the march of his army to hear the plaint of a poor widow who entreated his intervention in her cause, or ordered one of his suite, found guilty of violating the daughter of his hostess, to be hanged on the nearest tree, or protected the Jews from the malice and the extortions of Christians.³⁹ So pure was the atmosphere of his Court that for one of his courtiers to dishonour a woman was to incur instant disgrace and dismissal. It was certainly something new for a cavalier to be deprived of the right to use bad language, or read an obscene tale.⁴⁰ A sovereign who was at once moralist, philosopher, theologian, scientist, as well as a conscientious and laborious administrator—and that sovereign a Valois—is indeed a phenomenon. Unlike his father and grandfather, he had no love of camps, no predilection for knightly distinction. A malady with which he was attacked in his early days permanently shattered his health, and deprived him of the use of his right hand.⁴¹ He therefore left to rougher natures the uncongenial task of campaigning. For him the kingship was a charge, not a dignity, and its main function consists in the power of doing good to others.⁴²

³⁸ Christine de Pisan (Petitot), v. 284; cf. vi. 22-30.

³⁹ Ibid., v. 289-290.

⁴⁰ Ibid., v. 306-307.

⁴¹ Ibid., v. 345-346.

⁴² Ibid., vi. 59.

Happily for France, fortune provided him with a fitting counterpart in the victor of Cocherel, the Breton captain, whose military capacity Charles had the insight to discover and the good sense to use.⁴³ This Bertrand, born at the castle of La Motte de Bron in 1326, was a very devil of a boy, impertinent, ugly to a degree (none uglier between Rennes and Dinan, says the chronicler⁴⁴), quarrelsome, ever fighting the boys of the district, and inciting them to strife, detested by his father and mother, who would have been right glad had chance drowned him in some pond; a lad of mettle at all events, just the promise of a character which that fighting age might develop into a fighting genius. He obtained his training in arms in the rough school of that Breton warfare, amid which he grew up to manhood. In that struggle he took the side of Charles of Blois, and his name became famous as early as the siege of Rennes in 1356.⁴⁵ Eight years later, the capture of Mantes and Meulant, and the victory of Cocherel, for which Charles created him Count de Longueville, showed that France at last possessed a general. The co-operation of the philosopher king and the consummate man of action is the turning point of the drama. "There never was a king who had less to do with arms," cried Edward, "yet never was there a king who gave me so much to do." Charles had learned a lesson from the movement of which Marcel was the martyr—the necessity of eschewing the arbitrary and oppressive regime of his predecessors, and re-

⁴³ Christine de Pisan (Petitot), v. 382.

⁴⁴ See Cuvelier, *La Vie Vaillant Bertran du Guesclin*, i. 5, edited by E. Charrière under the title of *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*.

⁴⁵ *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*, i. 41-75.

forming the administration. On the field of Poitiers he had learned the necessity of reorganising the defensive force of the kingdom. Still more to the purpose, he found the man capable of applying the tactics fitted to merit success.

Success was, however, slow in coming. The victory of Cocherel was balanced by the defeat of Du Guesclin in Brittany some months later in an attempt to enforce the claim of Charles of Blois to the duchy. The arbiters appointed by Edward and John⁴⁶ had been unable to effect a peaceable termination of the long quarrel between the houses of Blois and Montfort. The truce between them was, however, prorogued,⁴⁷ but the death of King John was the signal for both sides to hazard an appeal to arms. The hostilities which ensued were virtually the renewal of the war between France and England, for both monarchs actively espoused the side of their respective *protégées*. Charles sent Bertrand du Guesclin into Brittany at the head of a French force to assist Charles of Blois, while Edward's lieutenant in France, John of Chandos, hastened to support De Montfort,⁴⁸ who was engaged in the siege of Auray. On the news of the approach of Blois and Du Guesclin from Guingamp, Chandos and De Montfort, who had just succeeded in forcing the garrison of Auray to capitulate, drew up their archers and men-at-arms in four divisions in battle array near the town. Chandos entrusted the command of

⁴⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 612-633.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 662-677 (July and September 1362). Edward resigned his self-assumed rights to the duchy in favour of John de Montfort on his coming of age in June 1362 (*Fœdera*, iii. 658).

⁴⁸ Froissart, vii, 21-28.

the first division to Robert Knolles, the second to Oliver de Clisson and Eustace d'Aubrecicourt. The command of the third he shared himself with De Montfort, while Hugh de Calverley held the fourth in reserve. Their opponents adopted the same order of battle, the first division being led by Du Guesclin himself, the second by the Counts of Auxerre and Joigny, the third by Charles of Blois, and the rearguard by the Lords De Rais and De Rieux. An attempt by the Lord De Beaumanoir to mediate failed, and on the 29th September both armies advanced to the shock. "My Lord De Montfort will this day be Duke of Brittany," said Chandos, as Beaumanoir made a last vain attempt to stay hostilities, "or he will die for it." Both fought with desperate stubbornness in the bloody encounter which ensued, and the French and Bretons only broke and fled after Charles of Blois had been killed, and Bertrand du Guesclin taken prisoner. The honour of the victory was largely due to Hugh de Calverley, who commanded the Anglo-Breton rearguard, and promptly succoured the other three battles whenever he observed their ranks broken by the pressure of their enemies. The fall of Charles of Blois, over whose dead body Montfort shed some generous tears, settled at last the question of the succession to the duchy, John de Montfort being acknowledged duke both by the partisans of his dead rival and by the French monarch, to whom, with the approval of Edward, he did homage.⁴⁹

For a quarter of a century the question of the

⁴⁹ Froissart, vii. 25-78; Chronique de B. du Guesclin, i. 198-238. The treaty between Charles V. and the Duke of Brittany is dated 12th April 1365.

succession to the duchy had been interwoven with the greater question of Edward's claim to the throne of France, and had afforded the English king incalculable advantage in pursuing the contest with Philip and John. Brittany more than Flanders was the open door into France, and the miserable country, which had been ravaged over and over by both sides, had indeed paid a terrible price for the privilege of having a full-fledged duke.

At the same time the quarrel between Charles and the King of Navarre was settled by treaty (6th March 1365), which gave Navarre Montpellier, in compensation for Mantes, Meulant, and Longueville in Normandy. The main sources of friction were thus removed, and the continuance of peace seemed assured. Unhappily the prospect proved illusory, but it was outside France that the spark was struck that relighted all too soon the conflagration of war. Don Pedro, who succeeded his father, Alphonso XI., in 1350 as King of Castille—Pedro the Cruel, as history has dubbed him—had acquired a sinister reputation as a sacrilegious and murderous tyrant. Rumour believed, and not without ground, that he had murdered his wife, Blanche de Bourbon, daughter of Duke Peter of Bourbon, at the instigation of his mistress Maria de Padilla; had made away with Leonora de Guzman, mother of his natural brother, Henry de Trastamare; and had attempted the life of Henry himself. He had excited the hostility of the Castillian magnates by his cruelties, and of Peter IV., King of Aragon, from whom he had wrested a portion of his territory.⁵⁰ He filled up the measure of his iniquities in Christian

⁵⁰ Chron. de B. du G., i. 240-260; Froissart, vii. 82-84.

eyes by oppressing the clergy and seizing the property of the Church, by maintaining friendly relations with the infidel King of Granada, and by bestowing favours on the Jews. In short, in the eyes of contemporaries, he was hated as "a bougre and a bad Christian"—nothing less than Antichrist, in fact—⁵¹ and his long-suffering subjects were now ripe for rebellion. In March 1363, Henry of Trastamare and Peter of Aragon bound themselves by the treaty of Monzon to co-operate in an attempt to dethrone Don Pedro and partition his dominions. They turned to the Pope and the King of France for assistance to carry out their design, and it occurred to Charles and Urban that they might take advantage of the opportunity to get rid of "the companies" who were still devastating France, and against whom Urban fulminated his ban in vain on the 5th April 1365. They had thought of an expedition against the Turk in response to an appeal from the King of Hungary, but the brigand chiefs were not minded to engage in so distant an adventure, and preferred to sell their services in a holy war against the impious tyrant on the other side of the Pyrenees, whom the Pope excommunicated on the 9th June 1365 in favour of Henry de Trastamare.⁵² It was a case of devil conspiring against devil, but Popes were not very scrupulous in those days about the character of their allies in doing the work of heaven, when it was good policy to court the devil against the devil.

A fit leader was found in Bertrand du Guesclin, whom the Pope and Charles ransomed for 100,000

⁵¹ Froissart, vii. 84.

⁵² Christine de Pisan (Petitot), v. 339; *Chronique de B. du Guesclin*, i. 260-271.

francs. Du Guesclin accordingly set out in October 1365, gathering contingents of these brigands by the way, till his total force rose to thirty thousand men. With him went the Count de la Marche, cousin of the murdered Queen of Castille, eager for vengeance, Marshal d'Audrehem, the Sire de Beaujeu, Hugh de Calverley, Eustace d'Aubrecicourt, and a host of other knightly adventurers of diverse nationality, in quest of fighting and booty. He halted at Ville-neuve, near Avignon, to receive the papal absolution and the papal blessing for his cut-throat army. "Behold," said Marshal d'Audrehem, to the cardinal envoys of the Pope, pointing to the cut-throat crowd, "those who have plundered the churches, and spread pillage, fire, and carnage throughout the land. To-day they demand absolution for the past, and money for the future." From the windows of his palace Urban saw their foraging parties scouring the country, and helping themselves liberally to the cattle and wine of the peasants. "Ah," cried he, "how those rascals give themselves trouble to go to hell."⁵⁸ Urban was, nevertheless, fain to give them his blessing on the way thither, and a sum of money to boot, and the sacred host set forward on its march across the Pyrenees. At Perpignan, where Du Guesclin concentrated its various contingents, it was welcomed by the King of Aragon, thirsting for revenge on his detested neighbour, in spite of the pillage that marked its track through his kingdom. Du Guesclin sent forward messengers to ask permission for his pilgrim army to pass through Castille on the pretext of a crusade against the infidel King of Granada. Don Pedro laughed sardonically at the

⁵⁸ Chron. de B. du G., i. 277.

request, and sent back word that he would make no terms with such a rabble. Du Guesclin thereupon threw off the mask, captured the Aragonese towns and fortresses in Pedro's possession, crossed the frontier into Castille, and took Maquelon and other frontier places by assault. The tidings of his progress fell like a thunderbolt on the tyrant, who, after a vain effort to rally his subjects in defence of a crown which he had forfeited by his cruelties, fled from Burgos, on the 28th March 1366, to Toledo, and thence to Seville. From Seville, which declared against him, he hurried into Portugal, only to be refused an asylum by Peter I. He next made for Galicia, where he could count on the protection of the governor, Fernando de Castro, who alone of the Castilian magnates had preserved his allegiance. A week after his precipitate departure from Burgos, Henry de Trastamare was received with acclamation by the citizens, and crowned King of Castille (5th April 1366), in virtue of a resolution as swift as it was spontaneous. He rewarded the services of Du Guesclin, who had materially contributed to this result, with the dignity of Duke of Trastamare.⁵⁴

From Corogne in Galicia, Pedro sent envoys to Bordeaux to solicit the assistance of the Prince of Wales, who, during the previous three years, had devoted himself to the task of governing his duchy of Aquitaine. Don Pedro could appeal to the treaty of alliance which he had concluded with Edward three years before,⁵⁵ and the Prince of Wales was just the

⁵⁴ Froissart, vii. 82-95; Chronique de B. du Guesclin, i. 280-349; Anciens Memoirs sur du Guesclin (Petitot), iv. 321-392.

⁵⁵ Foedera, iii. 671 (22nd June 1362), 688 (8th February 1363), and 690 (1st March 1363).

man to lend a willing ear to such an appeal. The prospect of fighting, even in the cause of a fugitive tyrant, stirred his martial instincts, and he caught at the opportunity of breaking the festive monotony of his rôle as petty ruler of Aquitaine, by an expedition across the Pyrenees. He was all the more ready to champion his cause inasmuch as Henry of Trastamare, who owed his crown to French intervention, transferred the alliance of Castille to the side of Charles V. His trusty adviser, John of Chandos, warned him in vain of the risks of such an adventure. "Monseigneur," said he, "qui trop embrasse mal éstrant." Adventure and action were the elixir of life to the victor of Poitiers, and he listened with impatience to the prudent counsel of his friend. "Chandos, Chandos," cried he, "I've seen the time that you would have given me other advice, whether the cause was right or wrong."⁵⁶ He restrained his impatience so far, however, as to adopt the proposal of Thomas Felton to submit the question to an assembly of the Aquitanian magnates, and meanwhile despatched Felton to Corogne to request the ex-king to come to him. His envoy found Don Pedro at Bayonne already on his way to solicit assistance in person. Prince Edward hastened southwards to welcome him. Don Pedro touched the right chord. He presented him with a magnificent piece of jewellery—a small table of gold, bristling with precious stones in imitation of the Round Table, and reminiscent of Oliver, Roland, Launcelot, Tristram, and other heroes of romantic chivalry. The prince hastened to show it to his wife, who, with a woman's foreboding, saw an

⁵⁶ Froissart, vii. 96-97.

evil omen in the transaction. "I fear," said she, "lest ill come of it. The present is beautiful, but it will yet cost us dear." The Aquitanian magnates, who repaired to Bordeaux to discuss the question of active intervention, were equally dubious as to the advisability of espousing the quarrel of one who had outraged morality so flagrantly, and was under the ban of the Church. The prince, on the other hand, looked at the matter from the purely dynastic point of view. "I know," replied he, in answer to their remonstrances, "the evil reputation of Don Pedro, and ill enough has he done, but it is not a question of his character, but of his royal rights. It is not fitting or reasonable that a bastard should drive him out of his kingdom and usurp his heritage. No king should on any account suffer this, for it is greatly to the prejudice of the royal state. Besides, my father and Don Pedro are bound by the tie of alliance, and it is our loyal duty to listen to his appeal for help."⁵⁷

The exaggerated reverence for royal prerogative at the expense of good government did not appeal to these prudent barons of Gascony. They answered that the prince should at all events consult his father before proceeding further. He accordingly despatched envoys to England to solicit Edward's approval. Edward took the same view as his son. Rebellion against royal authority could not be tolerated, whether royal authority was right or wrong. He therefore decided for intervention, and promised assistance in men and money. To this decision the Gascon lords waived all opposition. "We will obey the command of the king,

⁵⁷ Froissart, vii. 107.

our lord," said they, "but we would know who will pay us and our men for our services."⁵⁸ Don Pedro was ready to undertake the burden as far as promises to pay went, and the prince rashly undertook to advance the necessary cash in the meantime. He next sounded the King of Navarre, through whose territory the expedition must pass, at a conference at Bayonne. He, too, was persuaded to co-operate at a further conference at Libourne by the offer of the cession of Guipuscoa, Vittoria, Calahorra, and other frontier districts, and the payment of 200,000 gold florins by Don Pedro, part of which the prince kindly lent him. To the prince himself Pedro promised the province of Biscaye, with 550,000 florins in payment of the wages of his army, and surrendered his three daughters as hostages for his good faith. The prince received, too, the coveted right of fighting in the first rank under his banner against the infidel potentate of Granada⁵⁹ (23rd September 1366).

The prince then entered with enthusiasm on the task of preparing for the expedition. He recalled the English and Gascon knights who had joined Du Guesclin and espoused the cause of Henry.⁶⁰ He took into his pay "the companies" which Du Guesclin had disbanded on the completion of the

⁵⁸ Froissart, vii. 111.

⁵⁹ The papers relating to the transaction are given in *Fœdera*, iii. 798-807; the treaty with Navarre is in Spanish. There is some discrepancy in the account of events in the two versions of this transaction given by Froissart, vii. 95-115; cf. *Chron. de B. du Guesclin*, i. 368-377. I have followed the more circumstantial of the two, and checked it by comparison with official documents.

⁶⁰ Though Edward had written to John of Chandos to forbid any of his subjects taking part in the expedition against Don Pedro, Hugh Calverley and other adventurous Englishmen had already joined it (*Fœdera*, iii. 779).

subjugation of Castille, Don Pedro's treasure consisting in the main of promises of future remuneration; he melted down his plate in order to provide funds for the payment of his Gascon levies and the mercenary bands that swelled his army. He would fain have set out without delay, but circumstances protracted his departure till the early spring of 1367. It was dangerous to attempt the passage of the passes of the Pyrenees in midwinter, and with chivalrous domestic solicitude, he was desirous of awaiting the confinement of the princess—an event near at hand—before venturing forth to encounter the risks of what must prove no light campaign. The son whom the princess bore on the 6th January 1367, and whom James III., King of Majorca⁶¹—like Don Pedro, an exile at the Court of Bordeaux—held over the baptismal font, was destined to fame as the future Richard II. of England.

Four days after the auspicious event (10th January) the prince set out to join his army, which was already on the march southwards. There was a touching scene with the princess at parting. That sinister foreboding could not be shaken off. She implored him to stay. "Alas," sobbed she, "what will become of me if I lose the noblest flower of chivalry in this dangerous enterprise?" At last he tore himself away. "Cease your tears, and fear not, for God is all powerful. My heart tells me that we shall see each other again." So saying, he rode away,⁶² and overtook his army at Dax.

⁶¹ His father had been driven out of his island kingdom by the King of Aragon.

⁶² This touching scene is described by Chandos Herald.

Here he was joined by his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, with a contingent of English men-at-arms and archers.⁶³ The response to his summons had been so large (there was even a contingent of Scottish adventurers among the rest), that he had been compelled to reduce the levies which the Gascon lords had raised at his command. These Gascon magnates had no great liking for the enterprise of reinstating the tyrant, for Don Pedro's reputation was execrable, and the task of reducing his rebellious subjects would be difficult, as well as distasteful. But there was prospect of good pay and plenty of adventure, and Prince Edward was embarrassed by the numbers ready to follow him across the Pyrenees. The Lord of Albret, among others, had undertaken to find one thousand lances, but the prince could only accept two hundred, and his refusal to take more gave rise to ill-feeling, which was subsequently to bear evil fruits in disaffection and rebellion in Gascony itself.⁶⁴

Everything was in readiness for the march, when an unexpected hitch occurred. The slippery King of Navarre had been playing false, had, in fact, been treating with Henry de Trastamare, and showed no haste to keep faith with the prince. To lead a large army over those wild mountain passes of Navarre, in face of the treachery of the fickle monarch, could not be thought of. The prince accordingly sent John of Chandos and the Duke of Lancaster to negotiate an interview, and Hugh de Calverley to seize Miranda and Puente-la-Reina, on the Arga. This movement

⁶³ *Fœdera*, iii. 812.

⁶⁴ Veci auques le premiere fondation de la hayne que fu entre le Prince de Galles et le seigneur de Labreth (*Froissart*, vii. 146).

had the desired effect of expediting negotiation, and at Peyrehorade the King of Navarre renewed the treaty of Libourne. The army thereupon set forth from Dax, assured of an unimpeded passage across the Western Pyrenees. In the middle of February it toiled (in the midst of a blinding snowstorm) through the famous gorge of Roncevalles, and across the pass into the valley of the Arga, in three divisions. The advance guard, consisting of ten thousand horsemen, was led by the Duke of Lancaster and John of Chandos; the centre, twelve thousand strong, by the prince, Don Pedro, and the King of Navarre; the rearguard, of ten thousand men, by James of Majorca, the Captal de Buch, and the Lord of Albret. The passage of each division occupied a day—from the 14th to the 16th February. The whole force, of over thirty thousand men, concentrated near Pampeluna, to rest for some days from the fatigues of the toilsome march. From Pampeluna the prince sent Thomas Felton to discover the whereabouts of Henry de Trastamare, who, on his side, had not been idle. On the receipt of the news of the intended invasion, he had strengthened his alliance with the King of Aragon, by ceding to him the kingdom of Murcia, and summoned Du Guesclin, who had repaired to France to raise a fresh army. Charles V. espoused the cause of the popular Castillian king so effectively, that in a short time a second French army took the road over the Eastern Pyrenees into Aragon. Indirectly the struggle between Don Pedro and Henry was a renewal of the struggle between Edward and Charles, though their intervention in this furtive fashion could hardly be called an infringement of the treaty of Bretigny.

Henry was at San Domingo de la Calzada, on the road between Burgos and Pampeluna, where he was joined by Du Guesclin, when he heard of the passage of the prince across the Western Pyrenees. Sure of the devotion of his army of sixty thousand men, he despatched a herald with a spirited letter to the prince, to offer him battle in defence of his rights. To this letter the prince returned no immediate answer, but set out from Pampeluna westwards towards Vittoria, crossed the Guipuscoa, and passed the Navarrese frontier into Castille near Salvatierra, about ten miles eastwards from Vittoria. His objective was Burgos, where he hoped to strike the decisive blow, and restore the fugitive monarch to his throne and his capital. Salvatierra surrendered at his summons, and here he learned from Thomas Felton that the Spanish army, which had crossed the Ebro, and was encamped at Navarretta, on the Alava, a northern tributary of this river, was also advancing towards Vittoria, with intent to block his progress to Burgos. When, in continuation of his march, he approached Vittoria, he found the defiles of the Alava strongly occupied by his antagonist. Here it seemed as if the decisive struggle was to take place, the armies being almost within striking distance of each other. Yet neither general was willing to engage, for the prince was minus his rear-guard, which had not yet come up, and spent an anxious day in expectation of its arrival. Henry, too, was loth to hazard a battle, but his brothers, Don Tello and Don Sancho, were eager to improve the opportunity of making a dash at the enemy, and stole out of the Spanish camp during the night, and at daybreak burst upon the Duke of Lancaster.

The duke was taken by surprise, and only saved his division from destruction by rallying it on a hill hard by. In this position he held his ground till the other divisions came to the rescue, and beat off the Spaniards. During their retreat they came upon a reconnoitring party, under Thomas Felton, at Arinez. Felton hurriedly seized a hillock near, where his two hundred lances maintained a desperate struggle for several hours, before they were all killed or taken prisoners. His brother William, who charged alone down the hill, right into the midst of the foe, paid for his impulsive heroism with his life.

For several days the two armies retained their positions, both on the alert for the onset, yet both hesitating to engage, until the want of provisions forced the prince to abandon his line of march on Burgos by way of Vittoria, and essay that by way of Legroño. He therefore bent south-eastwards, along the north bank of the Ebro, as far as this town, where he crossed, Henry moving meanwhile in parallel fashion on the south side, towards Najera. From Legroño he addressed a letter⁶⁵ to his antagonist on the 1st April, offering to mediate between him and Don Pedro, on condition that he gave up the kingdom of Castille to its legitimate sovereign, as an indispensable preliminary of further negotiation. Du Guesclin was in favour of accepting the offer. "By my faith, Don Bertrand," cried Henry, "never. The people of this country have crowned me king, and king I will remain, and will live and die in my right." "So be it," returned Du Guesclin, "but be ready for battle, for in the army of the prince are the best generals and the most fell warriors in this

⁶⁵ *Fœdera*, iii. 823. The letter is written in Spanish and Latin.

world." Henry accordingly returned an answer to the effect that Don Pedro had forfeited his right to the crown by his misgovernment, that he (Henry) had been elected by the people in his stead, and that he was determined to defend his rights.⁶⁶ These Castillians were evidently not to be deprived of the right to good government by the figment of legitimacy, on which the prince laid such stress, if legitimacy meant the right to oppress the people. Don Pedro might inherit the crown; he had not inherited the right to make slaves of them. The doctrine of the popular weal is here asserted in the most positive fashion. The issue to be decided by these two armies is not merely whether Pedro or Henry shall be King of Castille, but whether prerogative or people is master. The Spaniards, like the English themselves, were by no means disposed in this fourteenth century to be a king-ridden people.

The dearth of supplies had materially helped to beget in the prince a conciliatory mood; the same necessity (Henry being obdurate) now forced him to fight.⁶⁷ On Friday, the 2nd April, he concentrated his army at Navarretta,⁶⁸ two leagues southwards of Legroño. At daybreak on the following morning, Saturday, the 3rd, his three divisions were again in motion towards Najera in quest of the enemy. From the summit of a hill they presently espied the host of Don Henry moving towards them on the plain below, likewise in three divisions, the centre, which was in advance of the other two, under Du

⁶⁶ *Foedera*, iii. 824.

⁶⁷ Car le plus de toutes ses gens estoient a grant destresse de famine et avoient esté bien XV. jours (*Froissart*, vii. 194).

⁶⁸ Not the place bearing the same name on the Alava.

Guesclin and Marshal d'Audrehem, the left under Don Tello and Don Sancho, the right under the king himself. Both flanks were protected by bodies of horsemen in full mail, and the total of the magnificent Spanish array was, if we may believe the chroniclers,⁶⁹ fully double that of the Anglo-Gascon army, the king's division alone, which was, by far the strongest, numbering 47,000 men. Such was the imposing spectacle that presented itself to the prince's eye as he descended to the plain on which the Spanish army halted and stood to arms, and as usual our picturesque chronicler goes into ecstasies over the fluttering banners and pennons, and the glittering armour and weapons of the motley and splendidly equipped host. At this impressive moment John of Chandos approached the prince, holding a furled banner in his hand. "My lord," said he, handing him the banner, "here is my banner; be pleased to unfurl it that I may follow it this day to victory, for I have sufficient lands to entitle me to the honour to fight under my own colours." The prince, Don Pedro, and the Duke of Lancaster grasped and unfurled it. "Behold your banner, Sir John," said the prince, placing it in his hands, "and God aid you to follow it valiantly in battle." Whereupon Chandos rode off to his division and presented it to his esquires. "Gentlemen," cried he, "behold my banner and yours; let us guard it to the death!" Which his companions in arms, laying their hands

⁶⁹ Froissart puts it at 67,000 men, but this is probably an exaggeration. The *Chronicon Angliæ* (p. 58) and *Chandos Herald* have 60,000. Ayala, who was an eye-witness, is more moderate, though he does not give exact figures (*Cronicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, i. 553).

on the staff, swore to do, and appointed William Dalby as its bearer. The prince, as usual, dismounted his men and marshalled them for the shock—the centre, under Lancaster and Chandos, over against the “battle” of Du Guesclin; the right, under himself and Don Pedro (Navarre had conveniently allowed himself to be taken prisoner some days before in order to await the issue), opposed to that of Don Tello, and the horsemen on the right flank; the left, under the King of Majorca and the Lord of Albret, to that of King Henry and the cavalry on his flank. “Gentlemen,” cried the prince, addressing his army, “there are your enemies, who are in possession of the utmost plenty, while we are starving. Be valiant and loyal, for I trust in God and you that the day shall be ours.” Then raising his hand to heaven, he prayed the God of battles to grant them the victory. It was a bad cause on which to implore the divine blessing, but the prince evidently believed that God must be on the side of a king against his rebellious subjects.

Turning once more to the army, he gave the order to attack—“Forward, banner, in the name of God and St George.” In a moment Lancaster and Chandos were in motion towards the enemy’s centre, the right and left of either army closing with each other at the same time. The struggle between the centres was long and fierce, the men-at-arms locked in deadly combat belabouring each other with sword and axe for want of space to use their spears, while the English archers and the French cross-bowmen poured volley after volley into the surging mass. Here, as at Crecy and Poitiers, the archers proved in deadly fashion the superiority of their

aim and the rapidity of their discharge; but in spite of the terrible hail of English arrows, the French and Aragonese, under Du Guesclin and D'Audrehem, obstinately held their ground. At one moment Chandos, ever in the van, dealing deadly blows with his battle-axe, was in extreme jeopardy. He was thrown down by a huge Catalanian, named Martin Fernandez, and in another instant would have been slain by his brawny assailant, had he not drawn his dagger and plunged it into his side as he lay across him. Then springing to his feet, he redoubled his efforts with such fury that the French square began to stagger and recede. The flight of Don Tello, who galloped away with the horsemen on his flank, without waiting for the onset of the prince's division, was followed by the speedy discomfiture of the remainder of the Spanish left, a disaster which exposed Du Guesclin's flank as well as his front to the deadly volleys of Lancaster's marksmen. The prince then hurried to stiffen his left in a grand attack on the Spanish right. With the shout, "St George, Guienne," the united divisions precipitated themselves on the vast and solid Castillian phalanx, which answered with the battle-cry, "St James, Castille for King Henry." Here again the archers did terrible execution in spite of the counter-volleys of cross-bowmen and slingers. Backward surged the great mass, as the English and Gascon men-at-arms hewed their way ever deeper into the great square, carrying disorder and terror into the rear ranks. Three times these latter wavered and broke, and three times the heroic king appealed to their patriotism not to leave him in the lurch. "I am your sovereign," cried he. "It is you who have made me King of

Castille; you have sworn to die in defence of my right, and as long as you fight, I will never flee." Three times they rallied at these brave words, but the discomfiture of the centre at length set free Lancaster's division to strengthen the prince by a flank attack on the wavering mass, which finally broke and fled towards Najera without hope of rally. The victors hotly pursued on horseback, and many of the fugitives threw themselves into the swollen river Najerilla, and only escaped the sword to be engulfed in the flood. The slaughter during the rout was even greater than in the battle, and the bloody business appropriately finished with the sack of Najera.

King Henry escaped on a swift courser, but as at Auray, Du Guesclin experienced the honourable misfortune of being taken prisoner after fierce fighting. Marshal d'Audrehem shared his misfortune. The horrible death-roll is an eloquent tribute to the heroic valour of the Franco-Spanish host, as well as the fierce impetuosity of their assailants. Froissart gives a total of 12,560 of all arms, without counting those drowned in the river, while the English scribe⁷⁰ contents himself with sending seven thousand "to hell," as he drastically phrases it. The loss on the Anglo-Gascon side was, on the other hand, according to Froissart, miraculously small, being limited to four cavaliers, twenty archers, and forty common soldiers! This would be incredible but for the fact that our chronicler, who was a *persona grata* at the Court of Bordeaux, had every opportunity of verifying his statements. But as he has evidently exaggerated the losses of the Spaniards, there is some room for

⁷⁰ Chronicon Angliæ, p. 59, Ad inferna properant; Knighton, ii. 122, has 8,000—5,000 in the battle and 3,000 in the pursuit.

the suspicion that, if the struggle was as severe as he and others assert, he was too easily imposed on by the gasconade of the victors.⁷¹

At Najera, as at Poitiers, the glory of the victory was enhanced by the fact that the generalship of the prince, and the valour of his half-starved English and Gascons, had conquered in spite of greatly superior numbers. It was, too, as at Poitiers, a question of winning or losing all, for defeat in an enemy's country with a range of impassable mountains in the rear, and nothing to eat, would have meant irreparable disaster. Once more the English archer had saved the situation, and extricated the prince from an embarrassing position in decisive fashion. The Spanish army was practically annihilated, and the submission of Castille to Don Pedro assured. The resentful tyrant would fain have given vent to his ire in a massacre of the grandees taken prisoners, but the prince, to his honour, interposed to frustrate the barbarous design, and only three—among them Gomez Carillo de Quintana, the leader of the rebellion—were beheaded in expiation of their treason. "Dear lord and good cousin," said Pedro, as the prince came forward to greet him after the battle, "I owe you much gratitude for the glorious day which you have won for me." "Render thanks to God," returned the prince humbly, "for victory cometh from Him and not from me." God has in-

⁷¹ For the expedition and the battle of Najera see Froissart, vii. 147-219, whose account is largely taken from the Chandos Herald; Ayala, *Cronicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, i. 550-559; *Chronique de B. du Guesclin*, i. 385-426; *Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 58-59; Knighton, ii. 121-122; *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, pp. 170-175 and 178-181; *Chronique Normande*, pp. 182-184.

deed sometimes been made to play a strange *rôle* in this illogical world, as has been apparent in the course of this history, and as will be apparent to the end of time. Let us rather give the credit to the English archer, and hope that the God of the righteous is not the God of a Don Pedro, and that the play of fortune which decided in favour of a hereditary tyrant, as against a popular monarch, is capable of an explanation by some subtle doctor that will save our faith in the traditional Providence.

On the following Monday, Don Pedro set out to secure the submission of Burgos, whither he was followed some days later by the prince. Here they spent a month in fraternal festivity, whilst the Spanish grandees flocked to the capital to renew the oath of allegiance. The fraternal festivity came to an abrupt period, however, when it came to the question of paying the prince's bill, amounting to one million gold pieces.⁷² Instead of answering this inconvenient question in hard cash, according to treaty, Don Pedro took himself off to Seville on pretext of finding the money, and promised to return with it by a given day. The prince meanwhile encamped at Valladolid, but three months passed, and still there was no sign of monarch or money. His starving army was obliged to have recourse to pillage, for the hostile population would give no supplies to a foreign conqueror, who, besides, had no money to make his presence palatable. Disease and famine began to work terrible havoc, and threatened its destruction if Don Pedro should not forthwith settle accounts. This was what the

⁷² Don Pedro reiterated his obligations to pay in a document given in *Foedera*, iii. 825, and dated 2nd and 6th May 1367.

crafty tyrant was probably counting on, or at least that famine would necessitate retreat. To the envoys sent to demand payment, he coolly replied that the Spanish grandees refused to furnish money so long as the invader remained on Spanish soil. Let the prince, therefore, withdraw his army, and he would pay without fail after his return to Aquitaine.

In his resentment the prince was minded to pay himself and his army out of the sack of Spanish cities, but famine and heat were fast thinning his ranks, and he himself was suffering from fever. "The devil," said he bitterly to the Bishop of Burgos, "has dragged me into mixing in the affairs of your king." Experience thus too tardily taught the rash and credulous young general who was the real patron of the expedition. To make matters worse, the princess wrote that Henry de Trastamare had burst into Aquitaine, and was burning and pillaging in revenge for his defeat. There was nothing for it but to hasten with the wreck of his fine army—reduced by this time to a fifth of its numbers⁷³—across the pass of Roncevalles to Bordeaux, where he arrived in the beginning of September, with enhanced military reputation indeed, but with health shattered, and an enormous debt to cripple the prosperity of the principality.⁷⁴ For with the Pyrenees between him and "his beloved cousin," Don Pedro could afford to break faith outright, and left him to overtax his subjects and beget rebellion⁷⁵

⁷³ Knighton, ii. 122.

⁷⁴ Froissart, vii. 236-243; *Chronique de B. du G.*, i. 436-442.

⁷⁵ Walsingham, i. 305, *Ob quam causam compulsus est manus mittere ad bona subditorum suorum, et in toto dominio Wasconiensi novas taxas exigere, et insuetas. Quamobrem cito postea defecerunt ab eo et rebellare coeperunt.*

by oppression, with many a chuckle, doubtless, at the cleverness of the trick that had got him back his crown for nothing.

He did not long enjoy this pleasure, however. Henry, who retired from Gascony at the news of the approach of the prince, and returned to Spain in the end of September, was a second time received as king at Burgos with popular acclamation. The greater part of Castille again declared for him, and his chance of speedily becoming master of the remainder was greatly increased by the offensive and defensive alliance with Charles V., which he signed at Toledo on the 20th November 1368.⁷⁶ Early in 1369, Du Guesclin, who had accompanied the prince to Bordeaux, and obtained his liberty on paying his ransom, again led a French force to his assistance. Don Pedro, on the other hand, bought the co-operation of the King of Granada, who placed thirty-five thousand Moors at his disposal. Thus reinforced, he resolved to risk a battle. The two armies met at Montiel on the 14th March, when victory declared decisively for Don Henry. Pedro fled to the castle of Montiel, but was caught while attempting to escape on the night of the 23rd March, and struck dead by Henry himself after a passionate altercation in the tent of his captor, the Begue de Vilaines.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 850.

⁷⁷ Froissart, vii. 241 and 261-273, who misdates the battle of Montiel by five months (13th August); *Chron. de B. du G.*; i. 458-465, ii. 1-121. Du Guesclin was made Constable of Castille and Duke of Molina by King Henry.

CHAPTER XX.

RENEWAL OF THE WAR, AND LOSS OF AQUITAINE (1369-1375).

THE result of the Spanish expedition was a reaction in Gascony, not very flattering to the prince's theory of the divine right of hereditary sovereigns. Government on the divine right principle has always been a failure in the long run, because it has always tended to end in government for the good of the sovereign instead of the people. No government, in truth, was ever less divine than that which invests itself with supernatural powers. In Spain it had led to disaster, and though the prince was by no means a Peter the Cruel, his application of the theory that made Peter a tyrant, made him too an oppressor, and alienated his subjects irrevocably. The government of territories, conquered by the foreigner, demanded the exercise of self-restraint and wisdom in a high degree. The prince was not the man to grapple with such a situation ; nor had the English at this stage of their history learned to govern with success a foreign possession. The prince's idea of government was merely to keep up a magnificent Court, and parade before the world as the most splendid and valorous knight of the age. To keep his courtiers in good humour by an endless series of festivities and amusements, to maintain his reputation as a munificent patron of

chivalry, seems to have been the *summum bonum* of government. The English idea of a colony in the fourteenth century was, moreover, that of a preserve to be exploited for the benefit of the conqueror. "It happened," says Froissart, "that the prince would not on any account lessen his expenses after the Spanish expedition, but maintained the same magnificent Court and undiminished profusion. His officers were, besides, guilty of such harsh exactions and requisitions in the prince's name, that the people of Poitou, Saintonge, La Rochelle, Rouergue, Quercy, and Aquitaine, were spoiled and oppressed beyond measure, for they carried off their wine, corn, hay, cattle, without payment and without the slightest consideration, saying, 'It is for my lord the prince.'" Still worse, the English officials to whom he entrusted the administration of the principality and adjoining provinces, to the exclusion of natives, looked upon the population as an inferior race, which it was their privilege to bleed to death for their own profit.¹

The simmering discontent boiled up in hot indignation when the Aquitanian taxpayer was called on to pay Don Pedro's debts! The Bishop of Bath, the chancellor of the principality, suggested a hearth tax of half a florin as the most effective expedient for filling the treasury. Chandos perceived the mischief that must result from so impolitic a measure, and endeavoured to dissuade him from acting on the chancellor's advice. Finding him obstinate, he retired to his lands at St Sauveur le Vicomte in Normandy. What he predicted came to pass. At a parliament held at Angouleme, in January 1368,

¹ Froissart, viii. 253-254.

a tax of ten sous per hearth for five years was indeed voted in return for certain concessions, and a second assembly, which met at Saintes in the following August, conceded an additional tax on tithes held by laics. But there was a powerful opposition which only needed the encouragement of Charles V. to break out in open defiance.

Against the hearth tax the Counts of Armagnac, Perigord, and Comminges, the Lord of Albret, and others, not only protested, they flatly refused to pay, and petitioned both the prince and his father for exemption, on the ground that their lands had hitherto enjoyed immunity from such exactions. Edward refused to listen to their representations, and Armagnac, who saw that the conquered provinces were ripe for rebellion, betook himself to Paris to implore the intervention of Charles (April). Charles adduced the treaty of Bretigny, by which he had signed away, in the most explicit terms, his sovereign rights over the ceded provinces, and his own desire to preserve peace, as reasons for declining to interfere. The recalcitrant barons pursued their intrigues, however, and they found ardent abettors in the Duke of Anjou and the Count of St Pol, who had both broken their parole, and were eager for war. Had not the King of England, they plausibly argued, himself violated the treaty of Bretigny by refusing to give up all the fortresses which he had agreed to cede to the French king? Had he not abetted the depredations of "the companies"? Nay, had not the Prince of Wales directed the lawless elements of his army, after the return from Spain, to seek indemnity for their services in the plunder of France, and had they not crossed the

Loire, in December 1367, and ravaged Burgundy and Champagne?

These reflections on Edward's honour were not well founded. He had done his honest best to observe the treaty. Far from encouraging or conniving at the depredations of the companies, he had over and over directed his subjects to abstain from associating themselves with these brigands.² Nay, in response to the appeal of the French king, he had even made preparations to aid Charles to put them down, but Charles, distrusting the co-operation of an English army in French territory, had himself sent ambassadors to request him to stop them. Edward was very angry at these shifty tactics, yet he insisted that the brigand chiefs should clear out of the towns and cities, which they had refused to give up to the French king in accordance with the treaty.³ In spite of these proofs of his good faith, Charles was persuaded, by the bellicose spirits of his council, to see in the depredations of the companies the machinations of his crafty antagonist, and to espouse the cause of the aggrieved Gascon lords. The marriage of the Lord of Albret with a daughter of the Duke of Bourbon, on the 4th May 1368, was at the same time a political bond between the French monarch and the Gascon magnates, with whom, six weeks later, he concluded a secret treaty of alliance in case of war with Edward III. (30th June). As the result of these intrigues, Charles at length assumed the right of hearing appeals from the barons of Gascony against the administration of the prince,

² See, for instance, his letter to the Prince of Wales, 16th November 1367 (Fœdera, iii. 834-835).

³ Walsingham, i. 302.

and, on the 15th January 1369, summoned him to Paris to answer for himself. The high spirit of the prince was wounded to the quick. "I shall, indeed, go to Paris," said he, "but it will be with my helmet on my head and sixty thousand men in my train." He gave still more forcible expression to his contempt for the self-assumed powers of the French monarch by throwing his messengers into prison.

Charles' contention was, however, supported by the Parliament of Paris, and three months later, he followed up the aggressive assumption by defying Edward, and sending an army into Ponthieu (April 1369). If Froissart speak truly, the challenge was delivered by a valet, and Charles, who was apparently deeply mortified by the violence done to his envoys by the prince, had the bad taste to add a personal insult to a national act.⁴ He had skilfully kept on the mask to the last moment, and had received with effusive marks of friendship the Duke of Clarence, who had paid him a visit in April 1368, while on his way to Milan to wed as his second wife, a daughter of Galeazzo Visconti.⁵ He had even sent Edward a present of fifty pipes of wine at the moment when he was preparing to violate the treaty by the invasion of English territory.

Edward had been warned by the Prince of Wales of the storm that was brewing, but, lulled by the pacific character of Charles V., he had remained sceptical. His common-sense might have taught him that a treaty which had deprived France of so much territory would only be observed until it could

⁴ Froissart, vii. 304-312; Christine de Pisan (Petitot), v. 342.

⁵ Walsingham, i. 306; *Fœdera*, iii. 845; Froissart, vii. 246-247; cf. *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 251-252.

safely be broken. What force had extorted, force would seek to regain. Charles V., philosopher and moralist though he was, was too good a patriot not to seek to recover lost ground. When at length Edward learned the truth in this disagreeable fashion, he sent back the wine, and made hasty preparations to repel the injury.⁶ He summoned Parliament to meet on the 3rd June in the confidence that its patriotism would respond to his determination to vindicate his rights by force. He was not disappointed. The country shared his indignation, and was as eager as its sovereign to avenge the perfidious tactics of the French monarch. The chancellor, William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, laid before the assembled orders a statement of the infringements of the treaty of which Charles had been guilty. The French king, he said, had not only failed to deliver up all the territories which he had agreed to cede, and to pay the sums stipulated; he had assumed sovereign rights over Aquitaine, which he had solemnly renounced; nay, had summoned its duke to appear in his Court to answer the charges against his administration, and had sent armies into both Ponthieu and Gascony. Parliament unanimously declared the king to be released from the obligations of the treaty, and entitled to resume the dignity of King of France, and granted an increased tax on wool, skins, and leather for three years,⁷ to which the clergy added a tenth in the following January.⁸ On the strength of this unanimous declaration in his favour, Edward drew up a memorandum, branding Charles as an usurper,

⁶ Walsingham, i. 306-307.

⁷ Rot. Par., ii. 299-300.

⁸ Wilkins, Concilia, iii. 82-84.

and formally resuming the style of King of England and France.⁹ With premature generosity, he granted all lands in France, with the exception of those belonging to the Crown and the Church, to whoever might conquer them,¹⁰ thus making a bid for the co-operation of the brigand bands which infested the kingdom. A most questionable method of recommending his claim to the French people, but Edward did not now seriously believe that he could win over the French nation to the idea of a foreign regime, and merely wished to do all the damage possible to his adversary in the coming struggle.

War being unavoidable, both sides, as usual, looked round for allies. The trend of events on the Continent had a very marked effect on Edward's attitude towards Scotland, which had recently been growing very bellicose. It was of the utmost importance to secure the neutrality of the Scots, and prevent them from espousing the cause of Charles. Hence the sudden reversal of the policy of embarrassing them into submission to his terms, which he had been pursuing for some years back. During the twelve years' interval since the treaty of Berwick in October 1357, he had never lost sight of the union of the Scottish and English crowns as a question of practical politics. For several years after the liberation of David, the relations of the two countries were fairly cordial, though the Scottish king is found in 1359 offering his active assistance to the French regent against Edward, on condition of a contribu-

⁹ Seals with the superscriptions "King of England and France" and "King of France and England" were delivered to the chancellor (Foedera, iii. 868).

¹⁰ Rot. Par., ii. 301-302; Foedera, iii. 874.

tion towards the payment of his ransom. France was too exhausted to take upon itself the burden of paying David's debt, and the renunciation of the league with Scotland by King John, as stipulated by the treaty of Bretigny, removed for the time being a long-standing impediment to the realisation of Edward's unionist policy. Experience had taught him that union by conquest was next to impossible. The Scots were clearly not to be conquered by force, but might they not be conquered by kindness, especially with the trump card of David's ransom to play? Might they not be induced to agree to the ultimate union of the crowns by the bait of the remission of the debt, backed by the offer of free trade and sundry other benefits? Such was the policy which commended itself to Edward's sagacity after the peace of Bretigny had set him free to resume his designs against Scottish independence. He had a very pliable subject in King David for making this new experiment in statecraft. David was extravagant, and so hard up that he had pledged a portion of the crown jewels to a Flemish merchant. The queen's jewels were also in the pawnbroker's hands. The ransom hung like a millstone round his neck, and though Scotland was ready to submit to great sacrifices in order to wipe out the debt, it was beyond its capacity to pay the yearly instalment of the ransom, and provide a revenue for a spendthrift king as well. Moreover, David was not happy in his freedom. He had an irrepressible hankering after the pleasures of the English Court, and took advantage of every pretext—pious ones among them, such as a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham—to gratify his effeminate tastes. Journey succeeded journey to

London, and each time he seems to have returned more discontented with the uncongenial routine of the kingship in a semi-barbarous country. One thing he clearly could not do—practise the Scottish virtue of thrift—and if he could not retrench his expenses, it was equally clear that the ransom could not be paid. It was no less clear that the Scots were getting impatient of the oppressive taxation which was impoverishing the nation without perceptibly lessening the national debt. The Steward and the Earls of March and Douglas were muttering sedition, and threatening to put an end to his misgovernment and that of his ministers¹¹ by force. In 1363 they rose in rebellion, and though David, with commendable energy, ran Douglas to earth at Lanark, and compelled him and his confederates to renew their allegiance, there was little prospect of continuing the rôle of patriotic king and royal spendthrift in circumstances so uncongenial to a gentleman of expensive tastes, fond of women, pageantry, and luxurious ease. Edward, it was evident, would have an easy task in bringing him to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, especially as he could work on his jealousy of the Steward, his indisputable heir, now that Queen Joanna was dead (she died in 1362), and David was a childless widower. Among the Scottish nobility, too, he could reckon on staunch adherents, whose suspicious pilgrimages to English shrines had similarly sapped their patriotism. He strove to extend the ramifications of his subtle policy by luring the studious Scottish youth to the univer-

¹¹ They were the Bishop of Brechin, chancellor; Sir Robert Erskine, chamberlain; and Walter Wardlaw, Archdeacon of Lothian (afterwards Bishop of Glasgow), secretary.

sities of Oxford and Cambridge,¹² and by becoming the generous patron of Scottish merchants. Political amalgamation would follow commercial reciprocity and personal bribery.

It was on the strength of this congeries of favourable circumstances that Edward at length ventured to show his hand, to an assembly of the privy councillors of both monarchs at Westminster; on the 27th November 1363. The scheme, for which he had been assiduously preparing the way for several years, was a revival of his grandfather's policy of a regal union, with this difference, that instead of uniting the crowns by a marriage between the heiress of that of Scotland and the heir of that of England, Edward proposed himself as David's successor!¹³ The dignity and integrity of the Scottish kingdom should, however, remain intact. The sovereign of England should merely be King of Scotland as well; should be crowned at Scone on the coronation stone (which was to be returned) by prelates of the Scottish Church appointed by the Pope; should swear to maintain inviolate the liberties of the Church and the laws and customs of the kingdom; should come under obligation to appoint natives only to offices in Church and State, to employ none but Scotsmen as his counsellors, and to guarantee the privileges of Scottish merchants, and immunity from all but the customary taxation; should, in short, act in all respects as a *bonâ-fide* King of Scotland, in accordance with its rights as a sovereign state. As inducements, he offered to give up Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh,

¹² See, for instance, *Fœdera*, iii. 717, where a general safe conduct is issued to Scottish scholars coming to study at the English universities (5th December 1363).

¹³ *Ibid.*, iii. 715.

Lochmaben, and all territories which he still held in Scotland, and to waive further payment of the ransom of the Scottish king. On paper at least the scheme was a tribute to the independence of Scotland, which is recognised in the most positive terms, and if it could have been literally observed, it might safely have been accepted as the solution of the difficult international problem how to secure the lasting co-operation of the two kingdoms in peaceful enterprise. A union that would have achieved this grand result was, from the standpoint of expediency, a thing devoutly to be wished. It would have prevented international friction, and saved England and Scotland much prospective loss and bloodshed. The union of the two countries in some such fashion as would guarantee the integrity of each, while ensuring their co-operation in foreign policy and commercial and industrial development, was really worth considering, as the future was to show. The Scottish alliance with France, and its consequent antagonism to England, must entail tremendous risks for Scotland, so long as England was so much the stronger power. If they could unite on honourable terms, and Scotland could at the same time maintain all that it had fought for so heroically, both would have gained much and lost nothing. It was a statesmanlike plan, and we are loth to see in it an attempt on the part of Edward to filch, or on that of David to barter away the independence of Scotland. But, the question of motives apart, there were circumstances which rendered this policy premature, if not impossible. For one thing, there *was* an heir to the Scottish crown, Robert the Steward, grandson of Robert Bruce, whom the Scottish Estates had recog-

nised as such, in virtue of the settlement of 1318. David was bound to adhere to that declaration of the national will, and in furtively ignoring it, he laid himself open to the charge of infidelity to his country. His jealousy of his successor, and the impecuniosity which his extravagance entailed, not his political sagacity, were, we fear, the ruling motives of his conduct, and they were not motives which could commend themselves to the nation in favour of what might otherwise be a statesmanlike policy. Equally discreditable were the motives of the faction of greedy nobles, whose support was bought with English gold. Edward's honesty, in offering to confirm in the most absolute manner the independent sovereignty of the Scottish crown, may be admitted, but while admitting that he probably meant to keep his word, it must also be admitted that the Scots had no particular reason for believing this, nay, had every reason, judging from experience, to distrust his earnest professions of respect for Scottish autonomy, as a mere change of tactics in order to compass his ambition. The man who had over and over again reduced Scotland to a desert, had himself to blame if to the Scots he seemed to fill the rôle of benefactor a trifle awkwardly. They would have none of him or his benefactions, in preference to the heir of their own choice, whom they could trust to maintain inviolate the heritage of their nationality, and this David discovered when, on the 4th March 1364, he laid this scheme before his Parliament at Scone. He had not the courage to propose Edward himself as his successor, and substituted one of his sons.¹⁴ This

¹⁴ Wyntoun, ii. 506. According to Bower (Scotichronicon, lib. xlv., c. 25), it was the Duke of Clarence.

manœuvre failed. The Estates curtly and decisively replied that "they would in nowise concede, or assent to, the wishes of the King of England and his council in this matter. They would have no Englishman to rule over them in preference to the lawful heir." At the same time, they professed their willingness to do their utmost to maintain peace, and preserve the liberty of their king and the integrity of the kingdom by discharging the remainder, as well as the arrears, of the ransom.¹⁵

It says a good deal for the patriotism of the Scots that they were ready to endure great pecuniary sacrifices rather than sanction what they regarded as a piece of interested statecraft. They might have had instant respite from the burdensome taxation which meant hard times for most of the taxpayers. Instead of welcoming this respite, they made desperate efforts to pay up arrears as well as meet the instalments of the ransom as they became due. Whilst embassy followed embassy to London to negotiate, if possible, the reduction of the debt and the prolongation of the truce, which in 1365 was extended for four years, Parliament was anxiously deliberating on ways and means for meeting its obligations. At its meeting at Perth in January 1365,

¹⁵ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, i. 135; Wyntoun, ii. 506. The minutes of the sitting and the proposals of union are given in Acts, i. 134-136. There follows an alternative arrangement which differs in some important particulars from the former. There was to be a truce for six hundred years, and the sovereign of each was to aid the other in case of war. In case of David's death without heirs, one of Edward's sons was to succeed him, &c. Tytler, History of Scotland, i. 210-216 (edition 1887), has made the strange mistake of making the meeting of Parliament precede the conference at Westminster. He dates it March 1363, instead of March 1364, and has thus played havoc with the sequence of events.

it decreed a wool tax of 8,000 marks, and added an income-tax of sixpence in the pound to make up the annual sum of £10,000, if the negotiations of its commissioners in London should prove unsuccessful.¹⁶ Edward was too skilful a diplomatist to entertain any proposal that would help the Scots out of their pecuniary embarrassments short of surrender to his own terms, and rejected its overtures. If the Scots would do homage to him as liege lord, and come to terms on the succession question, they might have a discharge forthwith from all their pecuniary obligations. To this proposal the Estates, which met in session at Holyrood on the 8th May 1366, returned a spirited answer: They declared Edward's terms to be "intolerable and inadmissible,"¹⁷ and at a subsequent meeting at Scone in July they enacted a land tax on the basis of a return of the value of all landed property—ecclesiastical as well as lay—for the payment of the debt.¹⁸ A year later (September 1367) they re-enacted the restitution of all lands alienated from the Crown since the reign of Alexander III.¹⁹ These drastic measures show that the mass of Scotsmen had held aloof from the pilgrimages to English shrines which had re-

¹⁶ Acts of the Par. of Scot., i. 138. The commissioners were authorised to offer as an equivalent for the payment of the ransom the restoration of the disinherited lords—Athole, Percy, Beaumont, Talbot, Ferrers, &c.—to their estates in Scotland, the settlement of Galloway and Man on one of Edward's sons, and a Scottish invasion of Ireland on his behalf. If these terms were not accepted, they were to negotiate a truce for twenty-four years, and undertake to pay 5,000 marks annually till the whole should be discharged (ibid., i. 137-138).

¹⁷ Ibid., i. 139.

¹⁹ Ibid., i. 144.

¹⁸ Ibid., i. 140-143.

sulted in the political conversion of their worthless king and a small faction of degenerate courtiers.

It was one thing for patriotism to dictate these energetic measures; it was another thing to enforce them. David, who had found a second wife in Margaret Logie, the beautiful daughter of Malcolm Drummond and widow of Sir John Logie, could and would not learn economy, and was widely unpopular. Rebellion broke out in the Highlands, where John of the Isles, the Steward's son-in-law, defied the injunction to pay his share of taxation. The spirit of faction was fanned by the imprisonment of the Steward, and the authority of the law was not increased by the truant disposition of the "feckless" monarch, who took every opportunity of escaping from duty by repeated pleasure trips across the border. The truce would expire in 1369, and it looked as if the country would have to face an English invasion in addition to a civil war. The English Parliament, which, equally with its sovereign, cherished the fixed idea that Scotland had no right to independence or nationality, was unanimous in resisting every proposal to compromise. The heroism of the Scots, which had baffled English armies and wounded English *amour propre*, could never be forgiven at Westminster. In this selfish and pugnacious century the weaker State has no rights as against the stronger, and in the session of 1368 the English Parliament insisted that their king should not abate a jot of his claims.²⁰ In spite of the embarrassments of the situation, the Scottish Estates,

²⁰ Rot. Par., ii. 295, A quele chose ils ne se assenteroint pur riens; cf. p. 269, where the same determination is expressed (session 1362).

convened at Scone in June 1368,²¹ showed equal firmness, and reiterated their conviction that Edward's terms were "intolerable and impossible," and in a subsequent session at Perth, in March 1369, despatched another commission to negotiate, if possible, a prolongation of the truce.²²

In these desperate circumstances Scottish patriotism would have found the task of buying itself out of the meshes of Edward's ambition a very uphill one, had not the exigencies of English foreign policy once more come to the rescue. The renewal of hostilities with France compelled Edward to change his tactics and become a less exacting creditor. He now strove to cultivate Scottish goodwill by negotiating on easy terms a truce for fourteen years, the remainder of the debt (56,000 marks in all) to be henceforth paid in instalments of 4,000 a year, and unrestricted commerce to subsist between the two countries.²³

Charles V., who was also angling in Scottish waters, could not accuse his Scottish brother of a breach of faith, for had he not, in his father's name, himself renounced the alliance with Scotland in 1360? This false step now stood Edward in good stead. The neutrality of the Scots was itself worth an army of fifty thousand men. In other directions, too, he was busy courting allies in competition with Charles. Six months before, he had contracted an alliance with the King of Aragon.²⁴ He could count

²¹ Acts, i. 145-148. The Estates deliberated on the measures to be taken to put down rebellion and put the country in a state of readiness to meet invasion.

²² Ibid., i. 148-149. ²³ Foedera, iii. 877 (20th July 1366).

²⁴ Ibid., iii. 855 (10th January 1369).

on the active support of the Dukes of Gueldres and Julich, who each promised to place one thousand lances at his disposal.²⁵ Two years previously he and Count Louis of Flanders had promised by treaty to support each other with men and money against their mutual enemies.²⁶ The King of France was, however, expressly excepted, and Charles had taken care to prevent their further approximation by successful intrigues against the proposal for a marriage between Margaret, the count's daughter, and Edward's son, Edmund, Earl of Cambridge. At his instigation the Pope refused to give the necessary dispensation,²⁷ and the heiress of Flanders became the wife of Charles' brother, Philip, Duke of Burgundy (19th June 1369²⁸), the papal conscience being subserviently compliant in this case, though similar objections applied to the match on grounds of canon law, which has received a good many blows at the Pope's hands in deference to political expediency. Charles, too, had the best of it in the competition for the adhesion of the King of Navarre, whom Edward tried to bribe with the offer of Champagne, Burgundy, and Limousin.²⁹ He was equally successful in defeating his rival's efforts to secure the Duchess of Brabant and Duke Albert of Bavaria, governor of Hainault, and as against the neutrality of Scotland, he could pit the active support of King

²⁵ Froissart, vii. 315 and 317.

²⁶ *Fœdera*, iii. 826 (26th May 1367).

²⁷ Walsingham, i. 300.

²⁸ *Chronicon Flandriæ* in *Corpus Chron. Fl.*, i. 333-335; cf. p. 233.

²⁹ The Prince of Wales refused to agree to the treaty as far as Limousin was concerned (*Fœdera*, iii. 907, 22nd January 1371), and Navarre accepted the counter-proposals of Charles.

Henry of Castille. His diplomacy was thus on the whole more than a match for that of his antagonist, and with this powerful backing and the trump card of Gascony to play, he might hope to obtain success in the field as well as in the cabinet.

Both sides of course sought to enlist the alliance of Heaven, and the curious and unedifying comedy was witnessed of competitive prayers and processions at Paris and London. Charles and his queen joined in these processions, and went barefooted through the streets praying and chanting their best to turn the Almighty into a partisan of human contention. The Archbishop of Toulouse preached the patriotic crusade from town to town in the south of France, and his fervid eloquence succeeded in converting as many as sixty towns in the conquered provinces into ardent partisans of King Charles. In Picardy and several other provinces the clergy were equally active as recruiting sergèants for the patriotic struggle. The patriotic sentiment which was beginning to weld France into something like unity, was a more formidable element of antagonism to Edward's policy of reducing it under an alien yoke, than all the alliances Charles could conjure against him. Thirty years of war and pillage had tended not to disintegrate but to unify the miserable people, and had begotten a patriotic consciousness which appears in the historic literature of the time in the phrase "a good Frenchman" (*un bon Français*). The States-General now rallied to the side of Charles with a national enthusiasm equal to that of the English Parliament itself. Edward's superior generalship had had a powerful ally in the absence of that fervid nationality which defeat and the enlightened

regime of a patriotic king had engendered. In the first half of the fourteenth century provincial France was far from being homogeneous in language or in national sentiment. Gascony, for instance, was no more French in feeling than Flanders or Brabant. English victories, and, it must be confessed, English misrule and want of sympathy with foreigners, had helped mightily to make France national, and in this nascent patriotism Edward might behold the rising tide that was to sweep away the triumphs of thirty years. The Bishop of London might fulminate from the pulpit on the righteousness of his cause,³⁰ and, with his fellow-prelates, ordain ecclesiastical demonstrations in behalf of his foreign policy. There was this difference between the sermons of his grace of Toulouse and those of his lordship of London. In the former case religion was the handmaid of a cause ever sacred to humanity; in the latter it was allied with mere political expediency. It could not be doubtful which side would have the best of the praying.

The war thus entered on offers few great and decisive actions. The Prince of Wales was too much weakened by dropsy to take the command in person, and there was no general equal to the task of adequately filling his place. The Duke of Lancaster was dead, and John of Ghent was not fitted to sustain the military reputation of his father-in-law. Walter de Manny was too old to draw the sword, and died in January 1372. John of Chandos was still available, but John of Chandos fell at an early stage of the war. Edward himself was no longer the energetic man of former campaigns, and preferred

³⁰ See Froissart, vii. 341.

not to take the field in person. The absence of the old leaders soon made itself felt in the absence of the old spirit of enterprise. The war never rose above the level of a series of raids, skirmishes, and sieges, which need not detain us unduly.

Edward's first move was to despatch his son, the Earl of Cambridge, and the Earl of Pembroke with reinforcements to the prince in the spring of 1369.³¹ They did not sail direct for Bordeaux, but landed at St Malo in Brittany, and were allowed by the duke, with a courtesy hardly in keeping with his fealty as a vassal of King Charles, to march through the duchy into Poitou. At Nantes they were joined by several of "the companies," to the number of three thousand men, and set forward to the prince's headquarters at Angouleme. Hither the prince had already summoned John of Chandos, who, though averse to the renewal of the war, hurried from St Sauveur in Normandy; Hugh de Calverley, who came from Spain; James Audley, Robert Knolles, the Captal de Buch, Guichard d'Angle, and other famous captains. Instead of uniting his forces for a decisive attack, the prince contented himself with dispersing them in various directions to raid the enemy's territory. He despatched Chandos, the Captal, and Guichard d'Angle to Montauban in Quercy, on the borders of Toulouse, where the Duke of Anjou had assembled a large force; Hugh de Calverley into the domains of the Count d'Armagnac and the Lord of Albret; Pembroke into Perigord to punish the defection of the count; Audley into Berri; and Knolles into Agenais. The work of ravaging the country went merrily on, and a town was captured

³¹ *Fœdera*, iii. 857.

and sacked here and there. • Bourdeille in Perigord, Roqueserrière in Toulouse, Rochemadour (Querci), Villefranche (Agenais), Broses (Berri), Belleperche (Bourbonnais), La Roche-sur-Yon (Anjou), and other fortified places, were taken by assault, or forced to capitulate. On the other hand, the Duke of Anjou, and the Duke of Berri, who was at the head of a second French force in Auvergne, retaliated by similar excursions into English territory. The capture of Roche-Posay on the borders of Poitou, and Réalville in Querci, did not, however, balance the successes of the prince's generals, who had decidedly the best of the campaign of 1369.

On the death of James Audley, the prince appointed John of Chandos seneschal of Poitou in his place.³² Chandos signalised his accession to this office by a successful raid on the borders of Anjou. The Earl of Pembroke, who, in a fit of jealousy, had refused to co-operate with him, and had gone on a raid in the same region, was punished for his insubordination by the surprise and defeat of his force at the village of Purnon by John de Vienne and Louis de Sancerre. Pembroke succeeded with the remnant of his men in gaining the protection of a house formerly belonging to the Knights Templars, where he stood at bay till evening. Towards midnight he despatched a messenger in hot haste to Poitiers to beg help of John of Chandos. Next morning the French a second time assailed the little band, which continued to defend itself with desperate valour till (Pembroke having sent a second messenger with a more urgent appeal for assistance) the news of the

³² Chandos already occupied the office in November, according to an official document cited by Fillon (Jean Chandos, pp. 30-31).

approach of Chandos caused his assailants to beat a hasty retreat. Pembroke took his revenge by raiding a second time into Anjou, and ravaging the county right up to Saumur on the Loire. Saumur, which was strongly held by Robert of Sancerre, defied assault, but the important post of Pont-de-Ce, which commanded the passage of the Loire to Angers, the capital of Anjou, was captured and occupied by an English garrison.

On the other hand, the French got possession of the abbey of St Savin, near Chauvigny, in Poitou, and it was in the attempt to retake it that John of Chandos met his death. On the evening of the 30th December, he set out from Poitiers, accompanied by Thomas Percy, seneschal of La Rochelle, and three hundred lances, to surprise the garrison. It happened that this evening a Breton captain, Jean de Kerlouet, had taken the road from Roche-Posay for St Savin, with intent to join the commander of the garrison, Louis de St Julien, in a raid into Poitou. He had arrived immediately before Chandos, and his troop crept up in the darkness. Chandos mistook the commotion inside for the alarm of the garrison at his own approach, and gave up the attempt, and retreated to Chauvigny. Here two hundred of his troopers, under Guichard d'Angle and Louis de Harcourt, left him in quest of some other adventure. They were followed shortly after by Thomas de Percy and thirty more. Whilst Chandos was warming himself in the kitchen of the house where he intended to spend the night, a man entered. "My lord," said he, "I bring you news." "What news?" asked Chandos. "The French are on the march," was the reply. "How do you know

that?" "My lord, I left St Savin with them." "Which way do they ride?" "I know not for certain, but I think towards Poitiers." "And who are their leaders?" "Louis de St Julien and Jean de Kerlouet." After a pause, he ordered his men to horse, and rode off on the road to Poitiers. He soon came on the hoof-marks of the enemy's horses, and followed them towards Lussac, where the road crossed the Vienne. Before the French reached the bridge, they were descried by Thomas de Percy and his troop, who were riding in the same direction on the other side of the river. Both parties set spurs to their horses in order to gain the bridge first. Percy won the race, and prepared to dispute the passage. The French dismounted, and gave their horses in charge of the varlets. At this moment the clatter of hoofs resounded behind them. What ho! Who is the strange troop? The banner of Chandos fluttering in front of the advancing troopers answered the question and sent the varlets scurrying away, horses and all. The French were, however, far superior in numbers, and, dismounted as they were, determined to fight. The fatal skirmish commenced by one of the Bretons plunging his sword into the breast of an English esquire. Chandos thereupon sprang to the ground, and advanced sword in hand, a long white mantle above his armour. In his eagerness he slipped on the wet ground, and fell. As he lay in the mud, he received a sword thrust below the eye from an esquire named Jacques de St Martin. The loss of an eye some years previously prevented him from observing the approach of his antagonist in time to ward off the blow. Unfortunately, too, he had neglected to put on his visor this

morning, and the sword pierced his brain. Chandos lay wallowing in agony, mortally wounded, while his followers closed round him and fought with maddening desperation in spite of large odds. Had Percy come to the rescue, the combat would have been more equal, but Percy was prevented from seeing what was taking place by the nature of the ground, and continued to maintain his defensive position on the other side of the river. Suddenly the clatter of horses' hoofs resounded a second time from the rear, and there, just in time to prevent the discomfiture of the little band heroically defending their prostrate leader, were Louis de Harcourt and Guichard d'Angle, who had also come upon and followed the track of the French. At their approach, St Julien and Kerlouet saw victory slip from their grasp, and surrendered. With tender hands the English bore their insensible leader on a bier of shields to Mortemer, and there the gallant warrior, hero of a hundred fights, breathed his last. "God have his soul in keeping," prays the chronicler, "for the sake of his goodness, for these hundred years past, there was no knight in all England more courteous, more gentle, or more distinguished by every good and noble virtue, than he."³³ His loss was an irreparable blow to the cause he had so loyally served in many a combat. Latterly he had raised his voice in favour of peace and good government. He had opposed the Spanish expedition and the hearth tax. His sagacity had been justified in both cases, and his death deprived the English army in Aquitaine of the only man fitted

³³ Froissart, vii. 459.

by experience and reputation to invigorate what was now to become a losing cause.

Simultaneously with these desultory operations in the south, hostilities had been in progress in the north. In June, Edward despatched the Duke of Lancaster and the Earls of Warwick and Hereford with a large force to Calais to attempt the recovery of Ponthieu.³⁴ The arrival of this force disconcerted the plan of a French invasion of England itself, for which purpose Charles had assembled an army at Rouen, and a fleet at Harfleur.³⁵ The advance of the Duke of Lancaster saved England from this attempt at retaliation on English soil of the misery inflicted by English armies on that of France. Instead of embarking the troops at Rouen, Charles despatched the Duke of Burgundy northwards to reinforce the Count of St Pol at Terouanne. The two armies came within striking distance at Tournehem, but though the Duke of Burgundy's force greatly outnumbered Lancaster's, Charles hesitated to hazard a battle. After a few insignificant skirmishes, Burgundy retreated to St Omer during the night of the 12th September, and disbanded his army, leaving the English, who discovered his withdrawal too late to pursue, to occupy his camp on the following day. Lancaster improved the opportunity to raid southwards across the Somme,³⁶ which he forded at Blanchetague, as far as Harfleur. His aim was to destroy the French fleet, still lying at anchor there

³⁴ *Foedera*, iii. 871. Lancaster replaced Hereford, who had been appointed on 10th May, as lieutenant of Calais and Guisnes.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 878, where Edward orders the men of the south counties to be ready to ward off the attack.

³⁶ *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 319.

awaiting the result of the operations further north. At his approach, it put out to sea, and the duke did not deem it prudent to cross the Seine in view of the lateness of the season, and marched back to Calais unmolested. During the march, the Earl of Warwick fell a victim to pestilence.³⁷ His death was another irreparable blow to Edward's cause. The death of Chandos and Warwick may, in fact, be regarded as the turning-point in the fortune of France.

The campaign of 1370 was disastrous for the English both in the south and the north. The operations on the side of the French were invigorated by the presence of Du Guesclin, who had loitered at Soria, spellbound, according to the chronicler, by the charms of a Spanish lady. Henceforth the enterprise and the military capacity of the great Breton were to prove their superiority in a succession of rapid feats. In the south, where the campaign opened with the recovery of Belleperche by the Duke of Bourbon, and the capture of Chatellerault by St Julien and Kerlouet, the French took the initiative. In the early spring, the armies of the Duke of Anjou at Toulouse, and the Duke of Berri in Auvergne, were in readiness for aggressive operations on a large scale. Their success was phenomenal. Anjou, with Du Guesclin for lieutenant, burst into Agenais with ten thousand men. His progress was made all the easier by the disaffection

³⁷ Walsingham, i. 308, who says that Warwick did not arrive in France till some time after Lancaster, and that the advance on Harfleur was due to his energetic presence. Froissart, however, makes him accompany Lancaster from the outset in his old capacity as marshal of the army.

which welcomed the invader as a deliverer. City after city opened its gates, and even those which were inclined to preserve their allegiance had little heart for a spirited resistance. Aiguillon, for instance, which had defied the efforts of an army of one hundred thousand men to reduce it in 1346, capitulated after an investment of four days' duration. In two months Anjou and Du Guesclin had taken over forty towns and fortresses, and had advanced within five leagues of Bordeaux itself. Equally successful was the expedition of the Duke of Berri further north in the Limousin. At the instigation of its bishop, Jean de Cros, who spread the report that the prince was dead, and that he himself had taken part in his obsequies, Limoges capitulated on the 21st September. It looked as if one campaign would make an end of the English occupation of Aquitaine. The arrival of the Duke of Lancaster, whom Edward had rather tardily despatched to the aid of the prince, checked the progress of the French armies. Lancaster joined his brother at Cognac, whither he had summoned the levies of Poitou, Saintonge, La Rochelle, Rouergue, Quercy, &c., to his standard. The languor of the disease-stricken prince betrayed itself in the dilatory preparations, and the boldness of the French advance had been due to the confidence that they had now little to fear from the once intrepid victor of Poitiers. Such was still the spell of his reputation, however, that the news of his preparations at Cognac determined Anjou to stay his march on Bordeaux, and disperse his army into garrison in the conquered towns.

The capitulation of Limoges stung the prince

into activity, and he at last set out from Cognac in September with a determination, steeled by the consciousness of his own remissness in sending timely succour, to take terrible vengeance on the traitors who had sworn fealty to the French king. He was so weak that he had to be carried in a litter. Limoges was too strong to be taken by assault, and he therefore set his miners to work to undermine the walls. The garrison made a countermine in the hope of meeting their opponents and destroying their works. The attempt failed, and after six days' incessant labour, all was ready. The army was drawn up for the assault, the miners set fire to the wooden props, a portion of the wall collapsed, and the advance guard dashed over the gap. In a twinkling they overpowered the guard, and opened the gate for the rest of the army to pass through. A horrible butchery supervened, for no quarter was given, neither age nor sex spared. The women and children threw themselves in vain on their knees before the prince to beg their lives. He looked grimly on while they were slaughtered before his eyes, until several thousand of these innocent creatures had been cut down without striking a blow in their defence. The bishop, on whom the chief guilt of treason lay, was seized in his palace. The prince swore that he would have his head, and only refrained from carrying out his threat at the entreaty of Pope Urban. The garrison sold their lives dearly. Their captains, John de Villemur, Roger de Beaufort, and Hugh de la Roche, drew up their men, with banners unfurled, before an old wall. There they stood at bay, defending themselves with desperate valour, till nearly all were struck down.

The prince watched the struggle with grim satisfaction from his litter, and spared the gallant commanders, who were engaged in hot combat with the Duke of Lancaster and the Earls of Pembroke and Cambridge, in recognition of their bravery. After the butchery began the work of pillage, and finally the city was given over to the flames. The prince then returned to Cognac, regretting, let us hope, in his calmer moments, an outrage which has sullied his reputation for knightly generosity. Pity that there was no Walter de Manny or good Queen Philippa at hand, as at Calais, to save his memory from the stain of such an execrable act of barbarity, which still further alienated the people of Aquitaine from the English regime. Edward sought to regain the popularity which his son had sacrificed by repealing the hearth tax on the 15th November.³⁸ This concession came too late, and in January 1371, the prince resigned his office into the hands of the Duke of Lancaster, and took ship for England with health hopelessly undermined, and with a reputation dimmed by the failures of the previous two years, and tarnished by the outrage at Limoges.

In the north, operations were carried on with more vigour by Robert Knolles, whom Edward appointed his lieutenant,³⁹ and despatched to Calais, with a force of about six thousand men, among whom was a Scottish company, one hundred strong. There was no attempt to dispute his march southwards, through Artois, Picardy, Vermandois, into Champagne. He ravaged the country, and levied black-

³⁸ The document is given by Delpil, *Documents Français en Angleterre*, pp. 129-130.

³⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 894 (1st July).

mail on the smaller towns *en route*, but did not stop to attack the larger ones. At Noyon, one of the Scots, John Seton, signalised his bravado by a singular feat. Spurring his horse, and followed by a single page, he dashed right up to the palisade. Leaving his horse in charge of the page, he jumped over the barrier, sword in hand, and rushed at a dozen French cavaliers standing near. "Gentlemen," cried he, "since you will not come out, I have come in to prove my prowess. Conquer me if you can." Thereupon he laid about him in true Scottish style—one against a dozen—the townsfolk standing by in great admiration, while he stretched a couple of his assailants on the ground. Anon his page approached the palisade, and shouted, "My lord, it is time to stop, for ours are going." With two or three doughty strokes to part with, the irrepressible Scot vaulted back, and mounted his horse. "Adieu, adieu, gentlemen, many thanks," cried he, galloping away, amid the applause of both cavaliers and citizens. From Champagne, Knolles turned westwards, about the middle of September, towards Paris. Charles beheld the smoke of the burning villages, but with his usual prudence, he refrained from sallying out to satisfy his resentment, and Knolles, after hovering about the environs of the capital for a few days, made off southwards towards Chartres. Thither he was followed shortly after by Du Guesclin, whom Charles summoned from Limousin, and invested with the sword of Constable (2nd October). Dissensions between Knolles and his subordinates, notably Sir John Menstreworth, who resented the superiority of merit in one whom he deemed a mere adventurer, gave the Constable his opportunity. Whilst thus

demoralised, Du Guesclin and Oliver de Clisson pounced upon the rearguard, under Thomas de Grandison, at Pontvallain, some leagues southwards of Mans, and totally defeated it (4th December). This reverse put a period to the expedition, which dispersed into Brittany. Knolles retired to his castle of Derval, while Menstreworth basely transferred his services to the French king.⁴⁰

Pope Urban, who had removed the papal residence to Rome four years before, had meanwhile been striving to re-establish peace. He returned to Avignon in September 1370, in order the more effectively to mediate between the belligerents. His good intentions were frustrated by the impossibility of finding acceptable grounds for compromise. Three months after his return to Avignon, he died (19th December), and eleven days later his place was filled by the election of Pierre Roger, nephew of Clement VI., who was ordained priest, consecrated bishop, and crowned Pope, as Gregory XI., in one day (4th January 1371). Gregory took up the laudable negotiations begun by Urban, but with no greater success.⁴¹ Instead of accepting the papal overtures, Edward turned, in February, to his Parliament for a special war grant. The chancellor, the Bishop of Winchester, magnified the preparations of Charles both by land and sea, and Parliament patriotically responded, on the 28th March, with a grant of £50,000, to be levied on the parishes of the kingdom at the rate of 22s. 3d. each, the larger parishes

⁴⁰ For the operations of the campaign of 1370, see Froissart, viii. 1-55; Walsingham, i. 309-311. Menstreworth was afterwards captured, and hanged for treason (*Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 135-136).

⁴¹ Walsingham, i. 313; *Fœdera*, iii. 929 (13th November 1371).

to make good the deficiencies of the smaller.⁴² In return for its generosity, it was gratified by the renewal of the enactment that no tax should be imposed on wool without its assent.⁴³ On examination, it was found that the number of parishes had been greatly overestimated. Instead of 40,000, there were only 8,600, and a great Council or Commission of Parliament, in June, raised the assessment to 116s.⁴⁴ Shortly after, the Convocations of Canterbury and York agreed to contribute an additional £50,000.⁴⁵

Another desultory campaign filled out the year 1371. It was opened by the Duke of Lancaster, who laid siege to Montpont, in Perigord. Its reduction cost him eleven weeks' incessant effort, for the garrison was numerous, and well provided with supplies. After a series of futile assaults, the English pickmen at length succeeded in making a breach in the walls, under the protection of movable towers, whose upper tiers were filled with archers, men-at-arms, and "artillerymen." These engaged the besieged, while the pickmen in the lowest tier undermined the wall. The breach made, the garrison surrendered, without awaiting the final attack (end of February 1371). The capture of Ussel, on the confines of Limousin and Auvergne, was another

⁴² Rot. Par., ii. 303-304.

⁴³ Statutes, i. 393; *Fœdera*, iii. 918; Rot. Par., ii. 308.

⁴⁴ In this computation the county of Chester was not included (Rot. Par., ii. 304). All Church lands acquired since 1291 were subjected to this tax.

⁴⁵ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 91; Walsingham, i. 312. The Convocation of Canterbury granted its quota on the 3rd May, that of York on the 10th July. In addition to these grants, Edward borrowed large sums (Walsingham, i. 309).

important gain on the English side. Further north, Thomas de Percy, Chandos' successor as seneschal of Poitou, reduced Montcontour, on the borders of Anjou, in September, and massacred the garrison. The unsuccessful attempts of Du Guesclin to relieve Montcontour and Montpont, and reconquer Ussel, were the only operations of any importance on the French side.⁴⁶ The energy of the heroic age had thus dwindled to zero, and war had become a game of hide-and-seek. The "companies," when not actively engaged on either side, did some raiding on their own account. "Thus," says the chronicler, "the country was parcelled out between friend and foe. The strong crushed the weak, and neighbour robbed and harried neighbour, whenever there was a chance. One day the English took the field, the next the French. Such a war was never seen, and no one knew where he stood. It happened several times that when the English marched against a fortress, and demanded its surrender, it turned English, and as soon as they were gone and the French appeared, it became French again. In this fashion many a town was robbed, burned, and destroyed, and many a castle levelled with the ground, and many a man killed and lost without mercy."⁴⁷

As a welcome variety in the midst of this petty warfare, our chronicler tells of a sea-fight between Flemings and English, on the 1st August, in the bay of Bourgneuf, off the coast of Brittany,⁴⁸ which

⁴⁶ Froissart erroneously says that he succeeded in reducing Ussel, and other places in Rouergue, and Quercy (see notes to Luce's edition, viii. 16-17).

⁴⁷ Froissart, viii. 76.

⁴⁸ *Chronicon Comitum Flandriæ*, in *Corp. Chron. Fl.*, i. 233.

developed out of a quarrel between English and Flemish sailors, and threatened for a time to lead to a rupture between Flanders and England. Edward sent a formidable fleet into the North Sea, to cut off the foreign trade of Flanders. This blockade sufficed to cool the bellicose mood of Count Louis, and amicable relations were re-established in March 1372.⁴⁹ A couple of weeks after this naval encounter, there was fought another battle—that of Bastweiler—outside the war arena in France, but forming a subordinate act in the war drama, between Edward's allies, the Dukes of Gueldres and Julich, and the Dukes of Brabant and Luxemburg, who had espoused the cause of Charles. Edward's allies had the best of it, but the Duke of Gueldres was killed, whilst he of Brabant was taken prisoner.⁵⁰

The year 1371 was more memorable for its diplomatic activity than for any decisive operation in the field. It witnessed the renewal of the Franco-Scottish alliance. David II. terminated his sorry career on the 22nd February 1371, at the age of forty-seven.⁵¹ In virtue of the settlement of 1318, the Steward became king under the title of Robert II., and though Douglas threatened opposition, he was overawed by a military demonstration at Linlithgow, and propitiated by the marriage of his eldest son to the king's daughter, Isabella.⁵² Robert signalled his accession by despatching Archibald Douglas and the Bishop of Glasgow⁵³ to negotiate a treaty with Charles V., which bound both monarchs

⁴⁹ See treaty in *Fœdera*, iii. 938.

⁵⁰ *Chronicon Comitum Flandriæ*, in *Corp. Chron. Fl.*, i. 233. For the campaign of 1371, see Froissart, viii. 64-100.

⁵¹ Wyntoun, ii. 507.

⁵² *Ibid.*, iii. 8-9.

⁵³ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, i. 196-197.

to render mutual aid in case of either being engaged in hostilities against the King of England.⁵⁴ It did not lead to active hostilities, however, though it forced Edward to be more alert on the border, where an occasional raid disturbed the peace.⁵⁵ Robert was too old (he was in his fifty-fifth year), and too indolent to embark on chivalrous enterprises, and he had seen too much of the misery of invasion in his earlier days to court a repetition of the risks of war by actively espousing the cause of Charles V. To his credit be it noted, he regularly paid the annual instalment of his predecessor's debt, which was finally discharged on the 1st December 1383, a few months before the expiry of the fourteen years' truce.⁵⁶

Charles also took advantage of the irritation of King Henry of Castille at the assumption by the Duke of Lancaster of his regal dignity in virtue of his marriage with the eldest daughter of Don Pedro, to negotiate his active participation in the struggle against Edward. The King of Navarre, too, signed his adhesion to the cause of his liege lord at Vernon.⁵⁷ Edward's response to these diplomatic moves of his astute antagonist was the renewal of the alliance with the Duke of Brittany, on whom he conferred the earldom of Richmond, Becherel, and other possessions in France.⁵⁸ As a set-off to the Franco-

⁵⁴ The treaty, dated Edinburgh, 28th October, is in *Fœdera*, iii. 925.

⁵⁵ See, for instance, *ibid.*, iii. 980.

⁵⁶ See Burnett's introduction to the second volume of the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*.

⁵⁷ *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 329-331 (March).

⁵⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 927-928 (November 1371), 935 (February 1372), and 936, 943 (June).

Castillian alliance in particular he courted the co-operation of the republic of Genoa, whose maritime power might be of service as a counterpoise to that of Castille.⁵⁹

On the strength of this readjustment of the diplomatic scales, both sides entered with more energy on the campaign of 1372. Edward replaced the Duke of Lancaster, who returned to England in the beginning of the year,⁶⁰ by the Earl of Pembroke as his lieutenant in Aquitaine.⁶¹ Pembroke set sail from Southampton for La Rochelle in June with a considerable fleet and a supply of florins wherewith to maintain a force of three thousand mercenaries for a year. With him went Guichard d'Angle, who had crossed the Channel to concert the operations of the campaign with Edward himself. On the 22nd June the English squadron hove in sight of La Rochelle to find its entrance barred by a well-equipped fleet, under the Genoese admiral, Boccanigra, and three Spanish captains, whom King Henry had promptly despatched at the instigation of Charles, to intercept the English armament. The Franco-Castillian alliance now bore fruit in a crushing disaster to the English navy. Pembroke made a gallant attempt to break through, but was forced to retire with the loss of four of his transports. The line of the great Spanish galleys could not be cleft by the smaller English ships. Pembroke nevertheless resolved to repeat the attempt on the morrow. It was indeed the only course left, and his only hope of success lay in the co-operation of the men of La Rochelle. Sir John Harpenden, the governor, ap-

⁵⁹ *Foedera*, iii. 931 (January 1372). ⁶⁰ *Walsingham*, i. 313.

⁶¹ *Foedera*, iii. 941 (20th April 1372).

pealed in vain to the hybrid patriotism of the Rochelése, who had been made English against their will. Next morning only three lords of Poitou followed the governor with their retainers to the fight. The battle was thus for the English a forlorn hope from the beginning, and bitter cause had Pembroke to rue the plan, suggested by Guichard d'Angle, of raising an army in Poitou, instead of recruiting one in England. The English archers and men-at-arms fought with desperate obstinacy to break through the great wooden wall of the Spanish galleys which showered down on the lighter English ships volleys of stones and iron and lead balls with crushing effect. Still more fatal were the fire ships, filled with grease and oil, which the Spaniards pushed in among the English vessels. The roar of the flames which devoured ship after ship drowned the noise of battle; still Pembroke and D'Angle fought on in hot hand-to-hand combat until nearly their whole fleet, the treasure vessel among the rest, was burned or sunk.

The battle of La Rochelle was the response of Spain to the bloody day of Winchelsea. It was a mortifying blow to Edward, who vaunted, not without reason hitherto, the proud title of "Lord of the Sea." No wonder, therefore, that Boccanigra set sail homewards with much indulgence in trumpet-blowing and other musical demonstrations, carrying Pembroke and D'Angle in chains with him. To have beaten an English fleet was reckoned at this time, as it would be now, the greatest military achievement of the age. To embitter the thought of defeat, Thomas de Percy and the Captal de Buch reached La Rochelle in the evening with reinforce-

ments, too late by some hours to prevent the disaster. Charles had intended the Spanish fleet to co-operate with a French squadron which Owen of Wales, a pretender to the Welsh crown, had collected at Harfleur in the invasion of England itself. Edward had arrayed the men of the southern counties in preparation for this emergency, and the beacons were ready on the heights along the coast to flash the tidings of the approach of the invaders from shire to shire.⁶² June passed, and no fleet appeared, for without the co-operation of Boccanigra, Owen of Wales could not hazard a landing, and contented himself with an irruption into Guernsey, which he wasted with fire and sword.

On land, too, disaster followed disaster. On receiving the news of Pembroke's defeat, Charles sent Du Guesclin to invade Poitou. His success was phenomenal. Montmorillon, Chauvigny, Lussac, Montcontour, St Sévère, opened their gates after a spirited resistance to the enterprising Constable or to his lieutenants, the Dukes of Berri and Bourbon, whose activity was seconded by the demoralisation which now saw in the cause of Edward a losing cause. While the English garrisons showed plenty of fight, the population was in no mood to endure hardships for the sake of an alien regime, especially as there were no leaders capable of inspiring confidence, and confirming their shaky allegiance. The men of Poitiers, in the absence of the seneschal, Thomas de Percy, entered into secret negotiations with the Constable, and on his appearance at the head of a few hundred lancers, welcomed him with patriotic *verve* (7th August).

⁶² *Fœdera*, iii. 945, 947.

The men of La Rochelle, which was blockaded by a Franco-Spanish fleet,⁶³ under De Rojas and Owen of Wales, were still more eager to throw off the hated English yoke. The strategy of their mayor was equal to the occasion. He showed the deputy commander of the garrison, Phillipot Mansel (in the absence of Jean Devereux), a letter purporting to be from Edward, enjoining him to pay the wages of the troops. The artless deputy commander fell into the trap, and promised to parade his men on the morrow (the 15th August) before the castle, in order that the mayor might formally pay over the sums owing them. This astute official meanwhile placed a force of armed burghers in some uninhabited houses near, and whilst he was attracting the attention of the garrison drawn up in front, they slipped between it and the castle gate, and forced it to surrender without striking a blow. The few men left on guard forthwith surrendered, and La Rochelle chuckled its patriotic satisfaction over the clever trick that had rid it of a distasteful thralldom. On the 8th September, Du Guesclin took formal possession in the name of Charles V.; who rewarded the defection of the citizens with large privileges. The Constable and his lieutenants took advantage of the defection of La Rochelle to reduce the castles in the surrounding districts that still held out for Edward. Benon made a determined resistance, which was ungenerously punished by the massacre of the garrison; the lord of Clisson—Butcher Clisson, as he was afterwards called—standing at the door of the

⁶³ After the descent on Guernsey, Owen of Wales had been despatched by Charles to solicit the return of the Spanish fleet—a request which King Henry granted.

castle, and himself cutting off the heads of the soldiers as they stepped out one by one (15th September).

The patriotic contagion spread all over Poitou, Saintonge, Angoumois. St Jean d'Angely, Angoulême, Saintes, Taillebourg, and other towns, changed sides with equal alacrity. To crown this accumulation of disasters, the Captal de Buch, the only leader capable of inspiring some measure of loyalty, was surprised and taken prisoner by Owen of Wales in an attempt to relieve Soubise (23rd August). "Guienne," cried the luckless prisoner, "thou art lost." Edward felt that he must himself step into the breach if he was not to lose every inch of his French territory. He appointed his grandson, Richard, regent, with full powers, during his absence,⁶⁴ and with the Duke of Lancaster and the Earl of Cambridge embarked at Sandwich on the 31st August⁶⁵ to cope in person with the victorious Constable. His fleet numbered four hundred vessels, and carried an army of four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand archers. Contrary winds kept him beating about in the Channel for nine weeks, and at last compelled him to abandon his design. Before the close of the campaign, the fall of Thouars, where a last stand was made by the lords of Poitou, who had agreed on the 18th September to capitulate if not relieved by the 30th November, completed the series of the Constable's remarkable successes.⁶⁶

It was a sorry tale that Edward had to recount, through his spokesman, Sir John Knyvett, the chan-

⁶⁴ Foedera, iii. 962.

⁶⁵ Ibid., iii. 962; cf. Rot. Par., ii. 309-310.

⁶⁶ For the campaign of 1372, see Froissart, viii. 114-220; Walsingham, i. 314-315.

cellor, and Sir Guy Brian, to Parliament, which met on the 3rd November. The confident tone which he had been accustomed to assume in his communications to the Lords and Commons relative to foreign policy was absent from the grave speech of Sir Guy Brian. There was no blinking the fact that, in spite of the large war grants of former years, Aquitaine⁶⁷ was as good as lost unless extraordinary efforts could be made to stem the tide of disaster. Parliament, whose patriotism was set on edge by the lugubrious recital, rose to the occasion, and forthwith granted the wool subsidy of 1369 for two years, and added a fifteenth for one year. After the departure of the knights of the shire, the members for cities and boroughs renewed the grant of tunnage and poundage—two shillings on each tun of wine, and sixpence on each pound of merchandise—which they had sanctioned in the previous year.⁶⁸ With this large supply of money Edward might even yet hope to recover lost ground. This hope was, unhappily for him, dashed by the crushing experiences of the campaign of 1373.

Early in the spring, Du Guesclin laid siege to Chizé, one of the few places in Poitou that still held out for Edward. The commanders of the beleaguered garrison, Robert Morton and Martin Scot, sent an urgent appeal for assistance to Jean Devereux, captain of Niort. Devereux set out at once to the rescue with seven hundred lances. Arrived at a wood near the French camp, which Du Guesclin had taken the precaution to entrench, he sent forward a party of

⁶⁷ The prince had resigned the principality into his father's hands on the 5th October.

⁶⁸ Rot. Par., ii. 310.

Breton mercenaries to skirmish, and draw out the wily Constable. The Bretons proceeded unwillingly on their mission, and instead of attacking the French, offered to co-operate in an attack on the English. Seeing their approach, the garrison sallied out, only to be routed for their over-hasty zeal before the main body of the English had even a suspicion of their fate. Du Guesclin then swept down on the unsuspecting Devereux, and attacked him simultaneously in front and on both flanks. The result was a signal victory, not a man escaping capture or death, though the English defended themselves with desperate valour. The fall of Niort followed this double victory, and with the exception of Mortagne, Merpuis, and La Roche-sur-Yon, the reconquest of Poitou was complete.⁶⁹

The arena of hostilities now changed to Brittany, whose duke was an ardent Anglophile, and espoused the cause of his old patron with chivalrous devotion. The astute Charles had, however, taken care to neutralise the alliance with Edward by skilful intrigues with the Breton bishops and nobles. The duke discovered that the Breton magnates, led by Oliver de Clisson, were French in sympathy, almost to a man; and when, at his request, Edward sent Lord John de Neville at the end of August 1372⁷⁰ with a small force to take possession of Brest, and followed up this aggressive step by despatching the Earl of Salisbury with reinforcements to St Malo in the spring of 1373,⁷¹ they at once appealed

⁶⁹ Froissart wrongly says that Lusignan capitulated on the same day as Niort. Its surrender did not take place till September 1374. See Luce's Froissart, viii. 63-64.

⁷⁰ Foedera, iii. 961. Neville landed at St Mathieu.

⁷¹ Ibid., iii. 971. The date of his commission is 8th February.

to Charles V. for aid. Charles responded by directing the Constable to assemble an army at Angers for the invasion of Brittany. The duke did not wait to try conclusions with the invaders in view of the general disaffection of his subjects, but took ship for England on the 28th April, leaving Robert Knolles as vicegerent in his absence. Rennes, Vannes, Dinan, and many other towns opened their gates, and the few towns which made some show of resistance, like Hennebont, were easily reduced. Salisbury retired from St Malo to Brest to join Knolles, but provisions becoming scarce, he put to sea in quest of the Spanish and French fleets, and left Knolles to defend Brest against the Constable. On the 6th July Knolles obtained a respite of a month, on condition of surrendering at the end of that term if not relieved, and after sending off a messenger in search of Salisbury, repaired to his castle of Derval, which was invested by a detachment of Du Guesclin's army, and whose commander, Hugh Browe, had negotiated a similar respite of forty days. Salisbury, who lay at anchor at Guerande, at once sailed back to Brest, and challenged Du Guesclin to fight a pitched battle. The Constable approached within a short distance of the English camp, but hesitated to risk an encounter, and finally decamped. Whereupon Salisbury re-embarked, and Brest was left unmolested. Shortly after, Du Guesclin, who spent the interval in visiting Roche-Derriou, and other towns in the north of Brittany, was recalled to cope with the Duke of Lancaster in the north of France, and his place was taken by the Duke of Anjou. The forty days passed, and Derval was still un-

relieved. Knolles, nevertheless, refused to surrender, on the ground that he had not authorised his subordinate to make the agreement. In his resentment, Anjou ordered four hostages to be decapitated in sight of the garrison (30th September). Knolles looked on in grim rage from a window of the castle, and retaliated by hanging four French prisoners on a scaffold in front of the window, and throwing their bodies into the ditch below.⁷²

Great preparations⁷³ had been made for Lancaster's expedition, which was destined to prove the climax of Edward's ill-fortune. The well-equipped army with which he and the Duke of Brittany crossed to Calais in June 1373,⁷⁴ was confidently expected to retrieve the disasters of the previous four years. At Calais it was reinforced by a large number of mercenaries from Brabant, Flanders, Hainault, and Germany. As on the occasion of the last expedition under Knolles, it counted a Scottish contingent in its ranks. To keep the troops in countenance, six months' wages were paid beforehand, and the army was, besides, provided with every requisite—including handmills and portable ovens—and ample supplies to merit success. It was unfortunate in its leader, however, who, unlike his famous brother, had no military genius, and was much addicted to women. He set out from Calais northwards in the beginning of August, in haphazard fashion, in the vain hope of

⁷² Froissart's account of the operations in Brittany is very confused. It has been admirably corrected by M. Luce in the notes to his edition of the *Chroniques*, t. viii.

⁷³ See *Fœdera*, iii. 975, 976, 987.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, iii. 982 ; *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 339.

alluring his wary antagonist to fight a pitched battle somewhere in the heart of France, and of regaining Brittany for its fugitive duke. He had not reckoned on the experience which had taught Charles V. to avoid a decisive issue, and wait on the co-operation of time and events. Charles remained impassive whilst the English army in three divisions, under the Earls of Warwick and Suffolk, the two dukes, and Sir Edward Despenser respectively, moved leisurely forward, at the rate of three or four leagues daily, by way of St Omer, Terouanne, Arras, Bray on the Somme, St Quentin, Laon, through Artois, Picardy, Vermandois into Champagne. There was plenty to eat, if there was no fighting worth speaking of, for the French contented themselves with hovering on the English rear and flanks, and only came within skirmishing distance with the stragglers of the English army as at Ribemont and Ouchy. So near were the horsemen of either side at times that they engaged in banter at each other's expense. "What a fine chance to soar," called out Henry de Percy to young Amery of Namur, who was riding along a short distance to his left one day; "why do you not fly when you've got the wings?" "Sir Percy," returned Amery, "you speak truly; it would be easy enough to fly at you, and if my word were listened to, we should be at you in a twinkling." "By God," cried Percy, "I believe you; get on the wing, and you will find good game."

Lancaster sent herald after herald to challenge his adrie Duke of ¹ Scotland in vain. Charles was too and his place a battle, Scotland from English cors which had The forty

stood its ally in good stead. These tactics were suggested by the Constable, and seconded by Oliver de Clisson and the Duke of Anjou, at a council of war held at Paris in the beginning of September. "The English," said Clisson, "have such a high opinion of their own prowess, and have gained so many victories, that they are confident they can never lose a battle. They are terrible fellows to fight, for the more bloodshed they see, whether on their own side or that of the enemy, the more furious and the more unyielding do they become. I advise you, therefore, not to fight unless you can take them at an advantage." Charles and his generals were not heroic, but they were wise, and their self-restraint in avoiding all risks did more harm to their enemy than a brilliant victory would have done. Du Guesclin, Clisson, and the Dukes of Bourbon and Burgundy shut themselves up in Troyes, and looked complacently on while Lancaster sacked the suburbs and harried the surrounding country, and kept him moving by troops of cavalry in his wake and on his flanks. The intervention of the papal envoys, who hastened to Paris and Troyes, failed to stop Lancaster's haphazard progress through Champagne into the upper valley of the Loire, which he crossed at Marcigny, followed by the cavalry of Du Guesclin and his fellow-captains, who constantly harassed his flanks and rear. At Sens, for example, a detachment of his army fell into an ambush set for it by De Clisson, and suffered severely.⁷⁵ The wily Constable gave his antagonist no opportunity of avenging this disaster in a pitched battle, and there was nothing for it but to push on through Auvergne into the

⁷⁵ La Chronique du bon duc Loys de Bourbon, pp. 54-55.

Limousin,⁷⁶ and get to Bordeaux as expeditiously as possible. It was in the latter provinces that the Constable's tactics began to tell with most disastrous effects. The winter cold and the increasing difficulty of finding forage and provisions in these bleak uplands wrought terrible havoc in the English ranks. Proud English noblemen were fain to beg a morsel of bread from the poverty-stricken peasants who had suffered so much from the ravages of the preceding years, and as in the case of the prodigal, "no man gave unto them." The army was reduced to a miserable, starving remnant before it reached Bordeaux at the end of the year, while nearly all the horses had fallen victims to cold and hunger, and the baggage waggons had been abandoned in the passes of the bleak mountains of Auvergne.⁷⁷

Before the crushing news reached England, Parliament had again (on the 29th November) granted, though with many murmurs, a fifteenth for two years, and renewed the wool subsidy and the grant of tunnage and poundage for the same term, on the assurance that the campaign was proceeding most successfully.⁷⁸ What must have been the dismay of the people when the grim truth leaked out, and the hopes which England had built on this

⁷⁶ The route followed by the duke from Troyes to Bordeaux is given by Luce (*Froissart*, viii. 100-101), from *l'Itineraire de Philippe le Hardi* par M. Petit. The principal points are Troyes, Joigny, Auxerre, Decize, St Pourcain, Riom, Clermont.

⁷⁷ Walsingham, i. 315-316.

⁷⁸ Rot. Par., ii. 316-317, *Queux pmy lour bon et noble gouvernement et fait d'armes ont fait grantz damages et destruccions as enemys par dela, &c.* Stubbs (*Constitutional History*, ii. 425) is wrong in saying that the chancellor recounted to Parliament the disasters of the expedition. On the contrary, his speech is optimistic, as the above quotation shows.

splendid army gave way before the sense of irretrievable failure. The disaster took all the spirit out of the king, now an exhausted voluptuary. He made some show of fitting out another expedition to his son's relief, but not a man was sent in time to enable him to follow up his challenge to the Duke of Anjou to a decisive battle at Moissac on the 3rd April. Instead of fighting a pitched battle, Lancaster arranged a truce to last till the 20th May, appointed Thomas Felton⁷⁹ seneschal of Aquitaine, and returned to England, leaving the cause of Edward hopelessly discredited, and followed by malicious rumours of having sacrificed his honour and his army to his greed of French gold! Nay, he had even entered into an agreement with Charles to get the Pope to declare the children of the Prince of Wales illegitimate and himself raised to the throne in their stead. To complete his damnification, rumour had it that he was not the son of Edward at all, but a waif whom Queen Philippa had foisted on her husband on the birth of a daughter at Ghent! After that, what will not scandal make of a man's ill luck?

Before the year was out, the Duke of Anjou, who, in co-operation with Du Guesclin, had reduced the towns of Upper Gascony to submission, and chased the "companies" out of Languedoc, had captured La Reole, Langon, Sainte Bazeille, Auberoche, and over forty other strongholds in the Bourdelais. With the exception of Bordeaux and Bayonne, Aquitaine was lost to the English crown.⁸⁰ Hos-

⁷⁹ *Fœdera*, iii. 1000 (6th March 1374).

⁸⁰ *Tota Aquitania præter Burdegaleam et Baionem deficit a rege Angliæ et ad Regem Franciæ se convertit* (Walsingham, p. 317).

tilities still flickered on the northern marches between the garrisons of Calais, and those of Boulogne and Abbeville, in Normandy, where the English garrison of St Sauveur maintained a long and heroic defence against Jean de Vienne, and in Brittany, whose duke crossed over with the Earl of Cambridge in May 1375 to win back his duchy with the help of an English force of six thousand men. He had captured St Mathieu, where he landed, and St Pol de Leon, and was engaged in the siege of Quimperlé, when operations were stopped by the news that the negotiations which had been carried on at Bruges for several months between the Duke of Lancaster, the Bishop of London, and the Earl of Salisbury, representing Edward,⁸¹ and the Duke of Burgundy, the Bishop of Amiens, and the Count of Tancarville on behalf of Charles, through the mediation of the papal envoys, had resulted in a truce for a year from 27th June 1375.⁸² The negotiations had been protracted by the demand of Lancaster that the Duke of Brittany should be reinstated in his duchy, and by the counter-demand of Burgundy that Lancaster should give up all claim to the crown of Castille. Ultimately both sides agreed to waive these conflicting contentions, and sheathe the sword for a year,⁸³ the truce being subsequently prorogued at a second conference at Bruges in March 1376 till

⁸¹ *Foedera*, iii. 1024 (20th February 1375).

⁸² *Ibid.*, iii. 1031; *Walsingham*, i. 318.

⁸³ The main provisions of the treaty were the raising of the siege of St Sauveur, which had agreed to surrender if not relieved by the 3rd July, and had been compelled to yield on that day under threat of massacre, though it was entitled to the benefit of the treaty, the exchange of the Captal de Buch for Roger de Beaufort and Jean de la Roche, &c.

the 30th June,⁸⁴ and afterwards till the 1st April 1377. The Duke of Brittany, who had granted a short respite to the garrison of Quimperlé, and now saw his prey escape him, was furious at the news. "A curse," cried he, "on the hour that I vouchsafed a truce to my foes."

While Edward was pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp policy of French conquest with such ultimate disastrous results, he had given scant attention to the far more practical task of pacifying and unifying Ireland. The work of extending English influence beyond the Pale, and conciliating both the English and the Irish populations, would have commended itself to a statesmanlike mind, though it might afford little opportunity for the display of chivalry on the grand scale of Edward's Continental campaigns. Edward, unfortunately, preferred the fatuous rôle of would-be conqueror of France and Scotland to the tamer but far more feasible and rational policy of uniting Ireland and England by the forces of wise and just government. The government of Ireland during his reign presents, on the contrary, a wretched spectacle of vacillation between violence and conciliation, fits of oppressive activity, followed by relapses into weakly and irrational compromise, —altogether a topsy-turvy of wrongly conceived and ill-applied expedients, inconceivably shortsighted, most of them, and ruinous to stable government. Edward's Irish regime is the most lamentable chapter in the history of his reign, but as it absorbed so small a share of his personal attention, ever directed to Quixotic enterprises against Scotland and France,

⁸⁴ *Fœdera*, iii. 1048. At this conference the Duke of Anjou was present in addition to the Duke of Burgundy.

I shall only attempt a brief outline of its results. The population contained three elements,—the native Irish, who maintained their ancient independence in the western portion of the island; the Anglo-Irish descendants of the English settlers in the Pale (English by blood, as they were called), and the English by birth, who formed the administrative class, or had recently immigrated. There was a considerable intermixture of blood between the Celtic and the Anglo-Irish elements, and in this fact a practical statesman would have found the keynote of a policy of fusion which must gradually have borne beneficial fruits in the growth of political union and civil order. This policy of fusion was so obviously advantageous to both England and Ireland, that it is incredible that it did not suggest itself to Edward's ambition, if not to his political sagacity. Instead of adopting this obvious policy, he did his best to alienate the Anglo-Irish and drive them more and more to identify themselves with the natives from a spirit of hostility to an intolerable government. He fomented the friction between them and the Englishmen born by conferring power and place on the latter, while he sought to depress the power of the great Anglo-Irish lords, such as the Earls of Kildare, Desmond, and Ormond, the De Burghs of Connaught, and others. A succession of harsh and unsympathetic viceroys, Sir Anthony Lucy (1331-1332), Sir John Morris (1341-1344), and Sir Ralph Ufford (1344-1346), carried out this fatuous policy during the first twenty years of the reign, with the result of repeated risings, followed by a temporary cessation of repressive measures, which only served to reveal the inherent weakness of the English

regime without securing respect for law and order, and to encourage the native Irish to encroach on the English settlements. What between the oppressions of the royal officials, the feuds between English by blood and English by birth, the raids and exactions of the Irish tribes on the border, the state of the country would have disgraced the regime of a Fez of Morocco. In 1361 Edward sent his son Lionel to attempt the restoration of order, and save the colony from threatened disintegration. He was utterly unfitted for a task which demanded the exercise of the greatest tact and sympathy, for in those qualities he was by predilection and prejudice entirely wanting. The main business of the royal viceroy was to recover the estates which he had inherited through his wife, the daughter of the Earl of Ulster, and which had been seized by a number of claimants after the murder of his father-in-law in 1333. He succeeded neither in this personal object, nor in recovering lost ground, and his failure to bring about that fusion of interest and race indispensable to sound government, received expression in the memorable statute of Kilkenny. This insensate measure was intended to perpetuate the separation of races in the hope of preserving what remained of the English colony from absorption in the amalgamation of the people which was steadily progressing in hostility to England. It proclaimed intermarriage and commerce between English and Irish, and the use of the Brehon laws within the Pale, to be high treason, punishable by death; prohibited the use of the Irish language or the adoption of the Irish dress and customs within the same limits, under pain of forfeiture and imprisonment; and

debarred the native Irish clergy from holding English benefices or being received into the religious houses of the settlement. The statute was as ineffective as it was mistaken, and while it did not arrest the assimilation of race which a wise statesmanship would have fostered, it demonstrated the impotence of the English Government to control the hostile forces arrayed against it, and only encouraged the lawlessness against which it was intended to be a barrier. So helpless were the English officials to maintain anything like stable government, that Sir William Windsore, Lionel's successor, was forced to pay tribute to the Irish chiefs to protect the border from native incursions. Had the Irish been united, they could as easily have uprooted the exotic plant of English conquest in Ireland as Charles V. was doing in France. As in the case of Aquitaine, the application of the English theory of a colony as a preserve for an oppressive official class, proved only too disastrously that Englishmen in the fourteenth century had not learned the elements of the art of successful colonisation. With these examples before us, we may form an idea of what the successful subjugation of the Scots would have meant both for England and Scotland. It would have plunged Scotland into the seethe of faction, civil war, race antagonism, and official extortion, which was the curse of Ireland, and it certainly would not have been to the interest of England to be saddled with a second Ireland north of the border. The failure of Edward's ambitious scheme ought to have been as much a subject of gratulation to Englishmen as to Scotsmen.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF EDWARD'S INTERNAL REGIME (1371-1376).

THERE only remains for me to trace, in completion of my task, the internal history of Edward's regime during these last tragic years of his life.

One of its most noticeable features is the presence of an anti-clerical feeling, which showed itself not only in a determined reaction against the jurisdiction of the Pope, but in active resistance to the privileges of the Church, and in no less determined attempts to reform the practical abuses of an effete religious life. There were ample grounds for this widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, discoverable in the nascent English literature, as well as in the records of the age. The clerical pretension to the enjoyment of large class privileges, in deference to the papal dogma of the absolute independence, even the superiority of the Church in relation to the State; the spectacle of a series of worldly prelates, engrossed in the pursuit of political, to the neglect of their episcopal functions; the deterioration of clerical morality; the remissness of the Ecclesiastical Courts in calling offenders to account; their obstinacy in resisting the efforts of the Civil Courts to do so; the overgrown wealth of the clerical estate, were abuses which no high-spirited nation could stand without protest, and

without attempts at reformation. Some of the prelates, such as Mepeham, Stratford, Islip, Langham—the more distinguished archbishops of the reign—were themselves reformers, though within ecclesiastical lines, and many of the clergy shared the determination to curtail the jurisdiction of the Pope, from whose exactions they were the greatest sufferers. There is, indeed, ample evidence to show that the name of the Pope was in very bad repute, in the England of the fourteenth century, for grasping greed and mercenary trafficking in sacred things. There was, in fact, a conviction that he cared more for the large revenue of which he annually mulcted the English Church, than for the spiritual interests of the English people. Doubtless his Holiness rebutted the aspersion as a malicious slander, but the facts amassed by the Parliament in support of the anti-papal crusade, were too notorious to be explained away by pious disclaimers. The conviction had been long growing in the public mind that drastic measures were imperative, both in regard to the Pope and the clergy. This feeling was shared by the Court, which, while opposed to constitutional, lent its aid, from interested motives, to ecclesiastical reform.

The anti-papal feeling had, as we have seen, been active throughout the reign; for a few years, from 1340, the anti-clerical feeling of the Court had been strong enough to drive the clerical members from the administration, in favour of secular ministers. The jealousy of the clerical estate again appeared during the session of 1344, in a petition presented by the Commons that no petition of the clergy, detrimental to the interests of the other two orders,

should be granted.¹ Two years later, the Commons are found petitioning that the lands acquired by the Church since 1291, in contravention of the Statute of Mortmain, should be taxed for revenue purposes.² In the session of 1371, the reaction against clerical politicians asserted itself with redoubled force. The Lords and Commons, led by the young Earl of Pembroke, insisted on the demand that all offices of State—Chancellor, Treasurer, Clerk of the Privy Seal, Barons of Exchequer, Chamberlains of Exchequer, Controller, &c.—should henceforth be filled by laymen. The argument adduced in its support, that clerical members were not amenable to the civil law, and could not be called to account for maladministration, was a very strong one. Edward apparently regarded the demand as an encroachment on his prerogative, and curtly replied that he would act in this matter as seemed best to himself, with advice of his council,³ but he subsequently complied, in virtue of the necessity of cultivating good relations with his Parliament, and substituted Sir Robert Thorpe⁴ for Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester and chancellor, and Sir Richard le Scrope for Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter and treasurer.

Another measure is equally suggestive of the strong tide against clerical privilege in this session. During the lengthy conference between the Lords and Commons relative to the aid demanded by the king, an attack was, it seems, made on the overgrown wealth of the Church. Voices were raised in favour of the contention that the clergy should be compelled to contribute to the revenue in proportion

¹ Rot. Par., ii. 149-150.

² Ibid., ii. 163; cf. p. 130.

³ Ibid., ii. 304.

⁴ Feederia, iii. 911 (14th March 1317).

to their wealth, in spite of privilege. One speaker likened them to an owl, which protected itself from the hawk by donning the feathers presented by the other birds. On the approach of the hawk, the latter, concerned for their own safety, demanded back their gifts, and when the owl refused, helped themselves by force. Moral—When the country is in danger, the State is justified in laying hands on Church property for the common good.⁵ Parliament did not venture on so drastic a remedy, but it insisted that all clerical estates obtained in contravention of the Statute of Mortmain should bear their full share of taxation.⁶ This was an act of justice, not necessarily of hostility, as the legacy of property to the Church, without the express permission of the king, was a breach of the statute law. But the action of the Lords and Commons was none the less inspired by hostility to clerical privilege,⁷ and, as we have seen, Edward took advantage of this feeling to exact from the clergy a sum equal to that granted by Parliament (£50,000). This hostility was no doubt fanned by the Court, which was dominated by Alice Perrers, the king's mistress, of whom more presently, and her interested and unscrupulous patron, John of Gaunt; but it is obviously unfair to ascribe it, as some have done, exclusively to this source,⁸ seeing

⁵ This speech has been preserved by Wicklif, and Dr Shirley (*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, pref. xxi.) considers that it was delivered on this occasion. Dr Stubbs (*Const. Hist.*, ii. 420) inclines to agree with him.

⁶ Rot. Par., ii. 304.

⁷ Walsingham, i. 313-314, who expressly says that the Lords acted "in odium ecclesiæ."

⁸ John of Gaunt was at this time in Aquitaine, and could not have had direct influence at least on the deliberations of Parliament.

that the antagonism to clerical privilege appeared at every favourable opportunity throughout the reign. There was, undoubtedly, a powerful element of honest and earnest conviction in the opposition, which proceeded from dissatisfaction with, and indignation at, the rampant ecclesiastical abuses of the time. This is evident from the tenor of the petitions presented during the following session (1372), which embody a large scheme of reform. The Commons complained of the continued distraint of public money to Rome in the form of provisions; of the exactions of the Ecclesiastical Courts in testamentary causes; of the dissoluteness of many of the clergy, who, though they might not marry, might purchase a license from their ordinaries to keep a concubine; of the scandal and evil example thereof; of the remissness of the Church courts in dealing with immoral priests. The strong language of these petitions, and of the remedies suggested, is very marked. Clerical greed, hypocrisy, and immorality were evidently an intolerable scandal, and must be dealt with by the Civil Courts. The king is asked not only to prohibit the waste of English treasure Romewards, but to put a stop to the extortions of the Ecclesiastical Courts, by subjecting them to the control of his judges. He should, for instance, fix the sum to be paid for proving of wills, and in case of extortion, summon the clerical culprit before his justices, and punish him by a fine ten times the amount of such extortion! In response, Edward promised to adopt the suggestion, should the prelates continue remiss in their duty. Similarly, the justices of Assizes should take cognisance of cases of flagrant immorality, and inflict heavy fines on delinquents. Moreover, the

obstinate immoral priest should be deprived of his cure, and the benefice declared vacant, in accordance with the law of the land. Should the ordinary fail to present, the right of patronage to devolve on the king.⁹

In the following session the Commons returned to the charge, complaining particularly of the continued abuse of provisions and the encroachment of the Ecclesiastical on the Civil Courts.¹⁰ The scandal of provisions was so notorious that even Pope Urban had been forced to take action, and had in 1366 directed the Archbishop of Canterbury to make inquiry throughout his province into the abuse of pluralities accruing from this practice.¹¹ The inquiry revealed a shocking state of affairs. Archbishop Langham found that a considerable number of the clergy were in possession of as many as twenty benefices, and in some cases even more, in virtue of these provisions. Shortly after the prorogation of Parliament, Edward on his own authority ordered an inquiry to be made by the bishops and sheriffs for the whole realm. He had already sent an embassy to Avignon to demand the abolition of the practice of reservations and the maintenance of the ancient right of free election to cathedrals and conventual churches.¹² Gregory evaded a direct answer, and suggested a conference. Edward accordingly despatched John Gibert, Bishop of Bangor, John de Wicklif, and five others to Bruges in July 1374,¹³ to meet the Bishops of Pampeluna and Senigaglia.

⁹ For these petitions see Rot. Par., ii. 312-314.

¹⁰ Ibid., ii. 319-320.

¹¹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 62; cf. p. 65.

¹² Walsingham, i. 316; cf. *Concilia*, iii. 97.

¹³ *Fœdera*, p. 1002 (May 1374).

whom Gregory had appointed as his nuncios. In thus seeking to put a final stop to an intolerable abuse, Edward had the sympathy of the English clergy, who were bitterly hostile to the papal exactions and to the undue interference of the Pope in the government of the English Church. At a synod convened at St Paul's by Archbishop Wittelsey in 1374, they loudly complained of the "intolerable yoke" of these exactions. Bishop Courtenay of Hereford declared, in fact, that neither he nor his diocese would contribute a penny to the king until this grievance was redressed. They protested with equal resoluteness against the papal interference in elections to English Sees.¹⁴

We have no account of the negotiations at Bruges, which were protracted till September 1375, and partly at least ran parallel to the negotiations for peace between the Dukes of Lancaster and Burgundy. We only know the result. It was very meagre, and there were loud complaints among the clergy that John of Gaunt had sacrificed the interests and rights of the National Church to selfish considerations. The Pope confirmed the appointments to benefices made by the king, and annulled the counter-provisions made by himself and his predecessor, Urban V. He undertook to cite no Englishman to appear personally in the Papal Court for three years, and to exempt the holders of certain benefices from first-fruits. On his side, Edward agreed to abstain from conferring benefices in virtue

¹⁴ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 97. Walsingham (i. 316) adds that Parliament enacted in 1373 the freedom of elections to cathedral churches. There is no reference to this Act in the Rolls. It was, he adds, wholly ineffective.

of the writ "quare impedit," by which he had absorbed a large amount of patronage.¹⁵ The Pope, as usual, had the best of the bargain, for the papal diplomacy has ever been very masterful in the art of making compromises for its own advantage. The practice of provisions and reservations might be a scandal and an abuse most detrimental to spiritual life and morality, but catch Gregory XI., or most of the mediæval Popes for that matter, dealing with such a matter with a single eye to spiritual life and morality. If it serve the useful political end of strengthening the papal influence to confer a benefice on some hireling of the Pope's *entourage*, or some partisan in a foreign country, political expediency shall carry it. The arch jugglers of Avignon came off best at Bruges, and succeeded perfectly in their purpose of fighting shy of principle. They were even more successful in shirking the demand that the Pope should abstain from interference with the right of free election, which, the chronicler¹⁶ informs us, was left entirely out of the treaty.

The controversy over the question of the Pope's ecclesiastical jurisdiction was contemporary with a dispute over the question of his temporal supremacy. In this dispute the supporters of the papal power had decidedly the worst of it. Englishmen might reluctantly submit to the exercise of the Pope's ecclesiastical overlordship; they would not, as has already been apparent, even hear of the claim to a temporal

¹⁵ See the Pope's Bulls, dated 1st September 1375, in *Fœdera*, iii. 1037, and *Walsingham*, i. 317.

¹⁶ *Walsingham*, i. 317, *Sed de electionibus* . . . in isto tractatu nihil penitus erat tactum. He adds that this was owing to the influence of those who hoped to profit by the favour of the Pope in attaining episcopal rank.

overlordship. In 1374 Edward convened a council of the Lords spiritual and temporal at Westminster to debate the question whether he was liable to pay tallage to the Pope in aid of his war with the Florentines. At this council several members of the mendicant orders were present by royal invitation. Archbishop Wittelsey opined in favour of the Pope's superiority in things temporal. The bishops concurred, and one of the friars confirmed their opinion that the Pope possessed both supreme temporal and spiritual power by a reference to the text, "Ecce duo Gladii hic." Whereupon John Mardesley, a minor friar, retorted by quoting the text, "Put up thy sword into its sheath," as proof that the Pope did not possess the sword of temporal power, and entered into an argument to prove from Scripture and the fathers that Christ neither possessed temporal power nor conferred it on His disciples, reminding his hearers, in conclusion, that the claim of Boniface VIII. had been rejected by both France and England. Thomas Ashburne, member of the Augustinian order, supported this contention, and maintained that, while to Peter was given the keys, to Paul was given the sword. "You, my lord prince," said he, addressing the Black Prince, who was present on behalf of his father, "were wont to be Paul who beareth the sword, but because you have demitted the sword, Peter will not recognise Paul. Wield the sword," concluded he, "and Peter will soon enough know who Paul is." "There was good counsel enough in England without the friars," testily returned the archbishop. "It is your fatuousness that has obliged us to summon them," retorted the prince. "Had we listened to your counsel, we should have

lost the kingdom." On the morrow, Wittelsey, on being again asked for his opinion, replied that he did not know what to answer. "Speak, you ass," rudely burst out the prince, "it is your duty to enlighten us." This was sufficient to unloose the archiepiscopal tongue, and he submissively answered that the Pope could not rightly claim temporal dominion. The bishops followed in subservient chorus. "Where are your two swords now?" maliciously asked the prince of the brother who had ventured a doubtful exegesis the previous day in support of the archbishop. "My lord," was the reply, "I am better informed to-day than I was yesterday." The Lords followed with the unanimous declaration that as King John had done homage to the Pope without assent of the barons, the demand for a papal subsidy could not be entertained.¹⁷

When Gregory XI. subsequently (1376) published a bull commanding all Governments to confiscate the property of Florentine merchants, Edward not only assured them of his protection, but took Courtenay, now Bishop of London, to task for publishing the presumptuous bull at St Paul's Cross. On being asked by the chancellor how he had dared to commit this flagrant violation of the laws without consulting the king, he could only reply, "Because the Pope commanded it." "Choose then," retorted the chancellor, "between losing your temporalities and revoking your words with your own mouth." The bishop, thus driven into a corner, elected the latter alternative. He saved his dignity, however, at the expense of his veracity in no very creditable

¹⁷ The account of this council is taken from Eulogium, iii. 337-339—the only authority.

fashion. He sent a proxy to proclaim in the most positive terms that he had said nothing about the papal interdict, and to express astonishment how he could have been so flagrantly misunderstood. "It is a strange thing," added this glib functionary, "that you cannot understand plain language after hearing so many sermons in this place." The effrontery of the proceeding was inimitable. Probably the bystanders were as much inclined to laugh at the audacious hypocrisy and lying of the speaker as to be angry at the aspersion of their intelligence.¹⁸

After the session of 1373, Parliament did not meet again till April 1376. Public opinion was not quiescent, however. The dissatisfaction with Edward's foreign policy, which we have frequently noted, ever since the war had become a grievous burden to the taxpayer, was intensified by the crowning disaster of 1373. The nation was mortified by the accumulated disgrace to its prestige, accruing from a series of crushing reverses. It was angry at the waste of its substance in the pursuit of a fatuous enterprise of royal ambition, which was now seen to be a huge mistake, if not a crime. It was now the turn of the English to pay for defeat, and if Englishmen had paid but grudgingly for victory, they were furious at the thought of being mulcted for a losing cause. The sacrifices of well-nigh fifty years of war with Scotland, or France, or both combined, had not only failed to win an inch of Scottish or French territory, they had merely proved to the victors that Scottish and French

¹⁸ Eulogium, iii. 335-336; cf. *Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 109-111, who, however, says nothing about the bishop's shady tactics.

nationality was impregnable, and had lost to England its Continental possessions into the bargain. John Bull had been paying to make France a nation and to vindicate beyond question the claim of the Scots to independence. This was by no means a consoling reflection, and there was a deeply-rooted conviction in the spring of 1376 that Edward's government had been a huge failure, and a determination to demand a reckoning.

Moreover, things had been going very ill at home in these latter years. Edward's health was undermined by the exertions of fifty years of bellicose ambition. His bodily powers had lost their energy; his mental powers were unstrung. The ideal of chivalry of the chroniclers has sunk to the level of the doting voluptuary. The death of Queen Philippa in 1369 left him under the spell of a Court beauty, Alice Perrers, of whose masculine force of character, rapacious greed, and shameless effrontery, he became the abject slave. Her enemies represent her as a most debased adventuress, and the clerical scribe who wrote the *Chronicon Angliæ*, and who is violently hostile to her and her patron, the Duke of Lancaster, has diligently reproduced the stories to her discredit. From this prejudiced source (our chief authority), we learn that she was the daughter of a plasterer of Henney (in Essex apparently), and had been household drudge and concubine to a certain obscure individual. She had no beauty (according to the ungallant monk), but possessed a glib tongue and an insinuating address, and had somehow (the scribe does not give details) managed to enamour the king, even in the lifetime of the queen, to whom she became waiting woman. After

the queen's death she appears as the all-powerful counsellor of her infatuated paramour, and not only managed the king, but directed the most important business of the nation. She had of course a keen eye to her own enrichment, and her rapacity did not stop short of using the most unscrupulous expedients to obtain money and estates. Against her machinations there was no appeal. Resistance meant ruin. That she was a witch is certain, and by her powers of magic could not only render virile force and sensual enjoyment to the worn-out voluptuary, but maintain the potent charm of her person. If she was not a witch (so reasons our credulous scribe), she was in league with a certain magician, a friar skilful in physic and the black art, who, by his diabolic subtleties, maintained the potent regime of the enchantress. Had not the subtle monk made two waxen images—one of the king and one of Alice—like that famous magician of old, King Nectanabus of Egypt,—and by means of the sap of powerful herbs, and the charm of his cunning incantations, transformed the royal image into the puppet of that of the royal mistress. The good scribe of St Albans is a trifle credulous as well as prejudiced, and the sensuality of the soft-brained voluptuary was enchanted by other arts than those of this crack-brained charlatan—the arts of a strong mind working on one weakened by excess and overwork, and only too susceptible to those of the prostitute.¹⁹ Edward so far forgot himself as to make an official present to her of the late queen's jewels and other property.²⁰ He outraged public feeling still more

¹⁹ For the portrait of Alice Perrers, see *Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 95-98.

²⁰ *Fœdera*, iii. 989.

flagrantly by permitting her to appear on the bench beside the judges, and overawe or cajole them into giving a decision in favour of some suitor who had bribed her to espouse his cause. The age might have swallowed any amount of licentiousness even in its king; there was sufficient honesty at least to resent conduct so outrageous.

The feeling was not lessened by the fact that Alice Perrers shared her influence over the king with John of Ghent, who, to preserve the supremacy he had gained over his father in these later years, in preference to the moribund Prince of Wales, bound himself to the omnipotent favourite. The duke's licentiousness was notorious,²¹ and the man who had been the unfaithful husband of two wives in succession had no reputation to lose on the score of morality by association with the all-powerful mistress of his father. He was ambitious of power, and was, rightly or wrongly, suspected of harbouring an unscrupulous determination to secure the succession in place of Richard of Bordeaux, son of the Black Prince, whose chance of himself occupying the throne was next to *nil*. A disastrous war, a return of the plague in 1369, accompanied by a recurrence of the labour difficulty, oppressive taxation, almost equally hampering to industry and production, an effeminate king, a corrupt Court, a decadent Church—such is the outline of the gloomy picture of the England of 1373-76. The storm of indignation was steadily brewing throughout these three miserable years, and during the session of 1376, which began on the 28th April, it burst with hurricane violence on the king and Court.

²¹ See Chron. Angliæ, p. 75.

The chancellor, Sir John Knyvett, in his opening speech, invited the assembled magnates and Commons to deliberate on three points—the good government of the kingdom, which meant, of course, a fresh grant of money, the national defence, and the prospective prosecution of the war.²² Of these, he laid most stress on the first, for politic reasons, no doubt, supply being again indispensable, and recommended the utmost despatch. The Lords and Commons, who retired to their several chambers to deliberate (the Commons, as usual, to the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey), were in no hasty mood on this occasion, however. As in 1373, the Commons requested that a committee of the Upper House should be appointed to confer with them on the subject-matter of the royal speech.²³ The Bishops of London, Norwich, St Davids, and Carlisle, the Earls of March, Warwick, Stafford, and Suffolk, Lord Percy, Sir Guy de Brian, Sir Henry le Scrope, and Sir Richard Stafford were chosen to represent the prelates, earls, and barons. The object of the Court party—to hurry through supply in the usual fashion at the cheap cost of giving vague or fallacious assurances to unwelcome petitions—was thus frustrated at the outset. The two Houses were bent on making the systematic inquisition into the government of the country which the Court feared and would fain have shunned, and the conference was a guarantee that their scrutiny would be minute and their action resolute and unanimous. It was, in fact, the organisation of the opposition, and was probably prearranged by the duke's opponents. It had the support of the Prince of Wales, whose jealousy of his brother was perhaps

²² Rot. Par., ii. 321.

²³ Ibid., ii. 322.

only too well founded, and of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester and ex-chancellor, who had his own grudge against the Court to whet his patriotism. The discredit of the Court, the maladministration of Lancaster's creatures, had for the nonce eliminated the antagonism towards the clergy observable in the previous three sessions. Patriotism and honesty rallied behind the prince and the bishop in one solid phalanx, which was determined not only to compel reform, but to demand the punishment of delinquents. To review the administration and impeach guilty ministers, not merely to complain of grievances and petition for redress, is the purpose of the conference. Hence the constitutional importance of the session, as marking one more step in the progress of the old assertion of the right of the people to good government and control of the administration.

We have no journal of the deliberations of the committee, and the consecutive course of the proceedings of Parliament is difficult to follow, though the record is voluminous.²⁴ But we have ample information of the resolutions agreed to and announced in full Parliament by the Speaker,²⁵ Sir Peter de la Mare, a knight of Herefordshire and seneschal to the Earl of March, whom the Commons, in agreement with the Lords, chose to fill this office, and who united in a rare degree courage, probity, firmness, and persistence—a dogged, formidable op-

²⁴ The Rolls of Parliament are supplemented by the detailed account in the *Chron. Angliæ* by a contemporary monk of St Albans, edited by E. M. Thompson.

²⁵ De la Mare did not bear the title of Speaker, which was first conferred on Sir Thomas Hungerford in the following session, but he performed the functions of this official, as Sir William Trussel and others did in previous sessions.

ponent, who would say his say and stick to his purpose in the face of browbeating and obstruction.²⁶

From the outspoken utterances of their spokesman, we learn that the Commons were determined to grant no further subsidy till a reliable account of the expenditure of former grants was rendered, and ministers guilty of defalcations were punished. The Lords and Commons, said the Speaker, in view of the large sums already granted for the purposes of the war, prayed the king to excuse them from a fresh subsidy. Owing to the calamities of recent years arising from pestilence, dearth of labourers, murrain among cattle, failure of crops (the previous summer had been one of continuous heat and drought), they were unable to comply with the demand for an aid, which, however, they would willingly grant on a future occasion. Moreover, if the king had had honest councillors, he would have been a rich man, seeing that not only had he received enormous contributions from the country, but large sums in the form of ransoms from the Kings of Scotland and France, and other prisoners. If the king was impecunious, some of his ministers had amassed great wealth, and this because they had fraudulently helped themselves to the public money. If the sovereign would punish the guilty, and cause them to disgorge their ill-gotten riches, as he was in justice bound, he would have sufficient to maintain his wars, and other charges, without further grievously burdening his Commons for a long time to come.²⁷

²⁶ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 72-73. The picture may be too highly coloured, as all our good chronicler's friends are saints, and all his enemies rascals.

²⁷ Rot. Par., ii. 322-323; cf. Chron. Angliæ, p. 73.

This was plain speaking with a vengeance, and very obnoxious to the Court faction. They were dumfounded as the Speaker proceeded in his exposure of their misgovernment and peculations. The Duke of Lancaster, who presided, hastened to adjourn the sitting in order to concoct expedients to ward off the threatened blow. Having recovered his equanimity in the conclave of his friends, he was inclined to be defiant. "What!" cried he, in response to the advice of some of his followers, "humour these upstart hedge-knights, who think themselves kings and princes of the land? I trow they are ignorant of my power. To-morrow I shall make them tame enough." "Your magnificence forgets," quoth one of those present, "that these knights are supported not by the people only, but by the most powerful of the land, among whom is Prince Edward, your brother. The citizens of London, too, are on their side, and will defend them from injury."²⁸

The duke felt the force of the admonition, and next day assumed a tone of the utmost graciousness towards the opposition. He was deeply conscious of the devotion of the Commons to the welfare of the country, and would be glad to hear what they had to recommend in the shape of reforms, nay, would do his best to apply whatever remedies they might suggest. It doubtless required all his power of deception to retain his self-possession as he listened to the oration of Sir Peter de la Mare, who once more gave resolute expression to the opinion of the large majority of both Houses. The ordinance of the staple, he complained, which fixed the sale of wool in foreign parts at Calais, had been systemati-

²⁸ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 74-75.

cally infringed by certain of the king's councillors, from whose frauds, not only the town of Calais, but the whole nation had suffered great loss. By their connivance the usurers who had advanced money to the king had claimed larger sums than they had lent, and shared their gains with their corrupt patrons at Court. From the same base motives they had had a hand in the speculations of those who bought up the royal loans from needy creditors for a tenth, or a twentieth, or even a hundredth part of the sums lent, and obtained full payment from the king. In substantiation whereof the Speaker cited Richard Lyons, merchant of London, and formerly farmer of customs and receiver of certain impositions levied without assent of Parliament, as guilty of these and other financial delinquencies, in consort with certain members of the Court. He instanced the case of a loan of 20,000 marks lately raised by the king in London, for which he was obliged to repay 30,000, the difference being shared by the said Richard, and his accomplices in high places.²⁹

One of these, no less a personage than Lord Latimer, chamberlain and privy councillor, was next denounced by the Speaker. He had been guilty of enormous extortions when captain of Becherel in Brittany, in contravention of the royal prohibition to take provisions from the inhabitants without payment; he had compelled several districts to pay a sum of 83,000 livres, of which the king had never received a sou; he had pocketed another contribution of 150,000 ecus d'or. Moreover, the loss of St Sauveur and Becherel was due to his treacherous and mercenary dealings with the enemy,

²⁹ Rot. Par., ii. 323-324.

and he was one of those most deeply implicated in the fraudulent transactions of Lyons.³⁰

Both accused denied these charges, or sought to exculpate themselves by lame explanations and excuses, and the duke made strenuous efforts to whitewash them. It looked ill for their honesty that they and their partisans sought to stop proceedings by bribery. Lyons tried the effect of this device on the king and the Prince of Wales. He sent a present of £1,000 to the latter, who returned it with indignation. Edward, if we may credit the scribe of St Albans, was less fastidious than his high-spirited son, and accepted the money with the jest that he was only taking his own.³¹ These shady tactics did not avail to stay the hand of Parliament. When Lord Neville, whose own record as steward of the household was by no means clean, attempted to intervene on Latimer's behalf, and insulted the Speaker, he was quietly told that his own turn was coming.³² Latimer was suspected of darker crimes than that of extortion, and was accused of intercepting inconvenient despatches, and putting their bearers out of the way. Certain it is that Lord Henry Percy demanded that a messenger from La Rochelle, whom Latimer had thus dealt with, should be produced from his prison. It was only after a hostile demonstration by the citizens of London that Lancaster gave way, and the man was brought forth. Bribery, it seems, was sufficiently potent to shut his mouth, and the same agency made another prisoner, Thomas de Kotrington, formerly warden of St Sauveur, who had offered to prove that Latimer

³⁰ Rot. Par., ii. 324-325. ³¹ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 79-80.

³² Ibid., pp. 80-81.

had treacherously surrendered that place, conveniently mute or evasive when interrogated by the Commons. But there was proof enough, in spite of lavish bribery, to convict both accused of systematic malversation, and Latimer was sentenced by the Lords to be fined and placed in the custody of the marshal, at the king's will, and at the request of the Commons deprived of his office.³³ Lyons was imprisoned in the Tower, and his property confiscated.³⁴ The charge of peculation against Lord Neville was also found proved, and a petition for his dismissal presented by the Commons to the king.³⁵

Several other delinquents of lesser importance having been dealt with, Parliament next turned the searchlight of its patriotism on the doings of the king's mistress. The English, interjects the chronicler apologetically, are a very loyal people, and their veneration for royalty makes them indulgent of royal vices (in the fourteenth century apparently), but the scandal had become a national disgrace, and must be wiped out, even if the heart of voluptuous majesty must be broken thereby. Gossip apart, there was, as has appeared, but too ample reasons for drastic action in the evils of this disreputable petticoat regime which could not be gainsaid. Edward would probably have remained obdurate to parliamentary representations of the dishonour and injury to himself and the nation from this scandalous *liaison*, but Parliament had an irrefutable argument in support of the demand that Alice Perrers must go. She was, the

³³ Rot. Par., ii. 326. On the 26th May he was released on bail, several of the bishops and a large number of the Lords agreeing to stand sureties (*ibid.*, ii. 326-327).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 324.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 328-329.

Commons asserted, the wife of another man, Sir William Windsore, Viceroy of Ireland. Consequently the king was living in open adultery. The senile voluptuary professed to be deeply shocked at finding himself hoodwinked by the clever enchantress. He swore by Saint Mary that he had not known the fact, and abhorred the thought of adultery, and reluctantly agreed to her dismissal. To save his honour, the Commons consented to waive the death penalty, and on this understanding Alice Perrers was arraigned before the Lords on a charge³⁶ of undue interference with the course of justice, and forbidden henceforth to approach the king, on pain of perpetual exile and the loss of her possessions.³⁷ The Lords compelled her to swear to observe the obligation on the cross of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who undertook to proclaim her anathema in case of perjury.

The Black Prince did not live to witness the crowning triumph of the parliamentary inquisition. He died on the 8th of June, on the day of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, his favourite festival.³⁸ The chronicler's sympathetic and affecting account³⁹ of his last days shows that in spite of the disasters of recent years, the hero of Poitiers and Najera had a strong hold on the respect and love of the nation. He had outlived the activity, but not the reputation of the brilliant part of his career, and amid the disgrace of his father's declining years and the unpopularity of his intriguing and unscrupulous younger

³⁶ In order to secure her condemnation Parliament caused an ordinance to be issued against women practising in the Courts of Law (Rot. Par., ii. 329).

³⁷ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 95-100.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 88-92.

brother, the nation found in the high character and chivalrous spirit of the Prince of Wales an antidote to its want of sympathy with a monarch whom it had long ceased to love or honour. The cheerfulness and resignation with which he bore the sufferings of the last five years of his life were in keeping with the heroic spirit of the man, and were strengthened by the religious feeling which his illness intensified. Though a successful general, he had not been a successful ruler. His administration of Aquitaine was largely responsible for the loss of the duchy, and it may be questioned whether if he had remained a strong man, he would, with his exalted notions of prerogative, have proved the beau ideal of kingship, which the people saw in him in these latter days. Nor is it probable that he could have effectively stemmed the tide of French patriotism, and prevented the inevitable reaction. The conditions of success were not so favourable as they had been, for the French had learned the lessons fitted to obviate defeat. They had, by their reckless tactics, given the prince the opportunity of winning his victories when a little wary procrastination would have undone him. They were too wise to repeat the mistakes responsible for their defeats, and it is questionable whether the prince, had he retained his old vigour and dash, would not have placed himself in an untenable position from which they would certainly not have extricated him by offering battle. In all likelihood he would have fared no better than the Duke of Lancaster with the wary Charles V. on the throne, and the cautious, resourceful Du Guesclin in the field. His ill-health had at all events saved him from the risk of wrecking his

military reputation, and he died, as he had lived, the popular hero of his admiring countrymen. The political part which he had played in these latter days, partly, doubtless, from opposition to his intriguing brother, had deservedly increased the popular admiration. By throwing his influence into the scale against the corruption and debauchery of the Court, he acted as a patriot and a high-minded man, and showed that at this period he had the interests of the country as well as his own at heart. His accession would certainly have been the signal for a long pent-up tribute of loyalty, and would have awakened expectations which would probably have been, to some extent at least, disappointed. When it was seen that death was inevitable, the attention of the nation was fixed on his sick-bed with unfeigned sorrow. The story of his last days—his paternal anxiety for the interests of his son, Richard; his affectionate solicitude in providing for his dependants and his servants; his patience and his piety; the magnanimity with which, after a hard struggle, he forgave his designing enemies—intensified this sorrow, which saw in his premature decease a national calamity. In the midst of this deep affliction which mourned the loss of the patriot and the hero, the nation overlooked the spots on the brilliant career of its favourite. The admiration of posterity would have been equally spontaneous had history had no massacre of Limoges and no cruel and barbarous raids to place to his account.

While the death of the prince afflicted the nation, it did not, to put it mildly, cost the ambitious Lancaster many tears. The chronicler is convinced that he was scheming, even in his lifetime, to divert

the succession past his son, to himself, and the chronicler, being evidently an inveterate enemy, is not an impartial witness. What is more to the point, Parliament evidently shared the conviction. When Lancaster, in his patriotic anxiety for the public weal, asked the Lords and Commons to settle the succession in the event of the death of the king and Richard of Bordeaux, on the principle adopted in France, that no woman could inherit the crown, they resolutely refused to be a party to his designs. To deprive the daughter of Prince Lionel, wife of the Earl of March, of her rights in favour of Lancaster himself as the next male heir, would be to place the life of Richard in jeopardy. Might not Lancaster clear the way to the throne by expedients not unknown to ambitious uncles who are next in the order of succession? Instead of complying, the Lords and Commons prayed the king⁴⁰ to present the son of the Black Prince to Parliament as heir to the crown. The boy was received with every mark of respect on the 25th June, and while Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed the kindly feelings of the whole assembly and of the nation towards him as the image of his honoured father, the Speaker begged the king to confer on him the title of Prince of Wales. This it was pointed out was the prerogative of the crown, but the Upper House assured the Commons that they would make due representations in the matter.⁴¹

Parliament then proceeded to provide guarantees against the recurrence of the misgovernment of corrupt ministers. The majority of the Lords and Commons were determined that the interests of the

⁴⁰ *Chronicon Angliæ*, pp. 92-93.

⁴¹ *Rot. Par.*, ii. 330.

country, not those of a dishonest clique and a shameless adventuress, should be the object of the ruling powers. They demanded that the king should for the future add ten or twelve lords to the council, who should be consulted in all the great affairs of State, and without whose assistance no important business should be determined. In matters of less importance he was to act by the advice of six or four of these additional councillors, who were to be in perpetual residence at Court, though they were not to interfere with the official duties of the chancellor, treasurer, and other officers of State. On no account should they receive bribes, or perpetrate any exaction, on pain of paying double the sum so acquired. All ordinances issued by the king with their advice should be faithfully and expeditiously executed by the royal ministers, who were likewise forbidden, under the same penalties, to accept gifts in the performance of their functions. All which Edward decreed in a number of ordinances,⁴² and appointed a special committee of advice, which included the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London and Winchester, the Earls of Arundel, Stafford, and March, and Lords Percy, Brian, and Beauchamp.⁴³ In return the Commons renewed the wool subsidy of 1373.⁴⁴

The amount of practical reform achieved by this Parliament during its unprecedentedly long session of ten weeks (it sat till the 6th July), amply entitles it to the distinction of "the Good Parliament." It had cleaned out the Augean stable of ministerial cor-

⁴² Rot. Par., pp. 322-323.

⁴³ Chronicon Angliæ, p. 100; cf. Introduction, p. 68.

⁴⁴ Rot. Par., ii. 323.

ruption and moral miasma, which made the Court and the Government a disgrace to the throne and a scandal to the country. It had read a lesson to unscrupulous officials, and established as a precedent the right of the nation to demand from its rulers an account of their stewardship. It had shown, long before the days of the Long Parliament and the Reform Parliament, that when English public opinion has made up its mind for reform, an anti-reform government cannot stand, more especially if that government is corrupt. The impeachment of guilty ministers, and the ordinances for the better government of the realm, by no means exhausted the reforming energies of the Good Parliament. The long roll of petitions subjoined to the dry official account of its proceedings (140 from the Commons, exclusive of those from the clergy), is significant of the reforming zeal that would fain have brought in the political millennium. As, however, the results were evanescent, there is no need for detail, except as they throw light on the abuses of the time. The Commons ask for the maintenance of the charters; the appointment of capable and honest juries in the Sheriff Courts; the repeal of chartered monopolies injurious to industry; the expulsion of the Lombard and foreign bankers (Jews and Saracens among them) as usurers and spies; the observance of the franchises of cities and burghs, and the suppression of the privileges, contrary thereto, accorded to foreign merchants; the punishment of sturdy beggars who will not work, and infest the towns; the nomination of justices of the peace, who are often the creatures of interested parties, by the parliamentary representatives of each county; the appointment of justices

of Assizes, who shall not be natives of the districts to which they are nominated, and therefore liable to use their office for the protection of their friends. Then follows a series of petitions in reference to ecclesiastical affairs. The property in possession of the Church, which exceeded a third of the whole land of the realm, should be devoted, as originally intended, for the maintenance of divine worship and works of charity. This property, instead of being applied to such high and useful ends, was largely used to pamper a foreign and non-resident clergy, under the protection of the Pope, who, to serve his own interests, ignored the right of free election, and distrained from the English Church in the form of papal dues an annual sum five times greater than the revenue of the king himself! The Pope, too, took care to make the country pay dearly for his bulls. Many of the Pope's nominees, who buy benefices in "the sinful city of Avignon," never set foot in the country, and thus do more harm to religion than all the Jews and Saracens in the world. One cardinal, for instance, is Dean of York, another Dean of Salisbury, another Dean of Norwich, another Archdeacon of Canterbury, and so on, and these aliens not only rob the Church and the State of 20,000 marks a year for doing not a stroke of work, but are the king's enemies into the bargain. The papal collector lives like a prince or a duke in London, and transmits not only vast sums but the secrets of State to Avignon for the benefit of its enemies. The Pope and his cardinals are not pastors, but shearers of the sheep. The patrons, taking a leaf from the Pope's book, openly sell their patronage to unworthy suitors. What marvel, then, that God

should afflict the world with wars, pestilence, famine, murrain of beasts, when the Church is so corrupt in head and members. These facts could not be gainsaid, for the scathing exposure is made by a Parliament, which, though hostile to a greedy and worldly foreign hierarchy, was friendly to the clergy, and professed anxiety for the interests of religion, education, and morality. We might be reading an indictment of the sixteenth instead of the fourteenth century, and this indictment by an assembly whose orthodoxy is above question. The remedies suggested are the familiar ones of the Statute of Provisors, proclamations against the papal officials, &c., and it is evident that if Parliament had had its way, there would have been a clean sweep of the papal exactions and usurpations long before the days of the English Reformation.

After this scathing indictment of the papal regime, the Commons returned to internal affairs, and petitioned for the effective execution of the Statute of Labourers. Hodge was evidently getting increasingly restive, and had he had the privilege of a spokesman in Parliament, would probably have been able to prove that there were other sinners against the principles of the Christian religion besides the Pope. The repressive measures renewed by the Commons show that they were taking a course which both sympathy and policy would have condemned. The near future was to emphasise in very startling fashion the folly of expecting that one class of men, and that the vast majority of the nation, would complacently submit to be fettered and oppressed by another, which represented, in numbers, at least, but a mere fraction of it. As yet, however,

Hodge has practically no rights, as against class selfishness and tyranny, and shall play the beast of burden if law can do it. If he kick against the law and the landlord, he will learn to his cost that a reforming Parliament has no reform for him.

Foreign competition was a sore point then as now, especially with the Londoners, who complained in Parliament of the privileges granted to foreign merchants in despite of their charters, and obtained the promise of redress, saving the franchises of the Hansa League. There is a trace, too, of hostility to free trade with Scotland in the demand, which, however, the king resisted, that the free exportation of corn should be disallowed, owing to the dearth of price. The lawlessness of the times is apparent in another petition against the armed bands which infested certain districts, and disturbed the peace of the lieges, and it is evident, from the representations on the subject, that the royal purveyors had not ceased their exactions, in spite of the ordinance of 1362. The demand for annual Parliaments, for the election of knights of the shire by the reputable inhabitants of the counties, and for the annual election of sheriffs who shall not be nominated by the Court of Exchequer, is noteworthy, as indicative of the striving to substitute a national for an official regime. The request that articles of impeachment be executed without impediment or favour is similarly significant.⁴⁵

The replies of the king to most of these petitions⁴⁶ reveals a disposition to humour the Commons

⁴⁵ From the *Chron. Angliæ*, pp. 93-94, we learn that Lord Latimer was allowed too great freedom, and that Richard Lyons was permitted to live in princely style in the Tower.

⁴⁶ They are given in the *Rot. Par.*, ii. 331-360.

and observe the constitution, but the fact that many of these abuses had been denounced by successive Parliaments throughout the reign, and the enormous list of grievances handed in by this Parliament in particular at its close, does not incline us to conclude that Edward was a very zealous reformer. While he had, with some exceptions, refrained from high-handed innovations on the constitution, he had allowed a vast amount of illegality and corruption to accumulate, which does not speak well for his assiduity in attending to the administration of internal affairs. His wars were the main object of his life, and while he failed in his ambitious schemes, he left too much to others the nobler *rôle* of administrator. His fame as a warrior would probably have been greater, or at least less open to question, had his reputation as a conscientious administrator been higher.

CHAPTER XXII.

FINIS (1377).

THE prorogation of the Good Parliament was followed by a defiant attempt to undo its work on the part of the Duke of Lancaster and his faction. The duke wielded supreme influence over his decrepit father, and was virtually captain of the ship of State.¹ At his instigation, Edward restored Lord Latimer to favour and office, remitted his debts, and actually constituted him one of his executors. On the other hand, the duke dismissed the councillors appointed at the instance of Parliament, and justified his action by the outrageous plea that it was no Parliament at all, and that its enactments had therefore no force. This audacious reasoning roused the ire of the nation, which cursed Lancaster as a traitor and a tyrant.² But worse outrages were to come. Premature senility had not extinguished the voluptuous cravings of the royal dotard, and his unworthy son gratified his passions by recalling Alice Perrers to his bed, in spite of her oath and the execrations of the people, who could not conceal their detestation of the royal person.³

¹ Chron. Angliæ, p. 107, Dux vero qui omnia jam negotia regni tractabat.

² Ibid., pp. 102-103.

³ Ibid., p. 104, Ex quo factus est murmur in populo et prodiit regiæ personæ detestatio.

To this outrageous proceeding, Archbishop Sudbury, greatly to the scandal of all decent Christians,⁴ shut his eyes, though he was under obligation to Parliament to launch against the royal mistress the sentence of excommunication. The advent of Mistress Alice was the signal for the persecution of her opponents. Sir Peter de la Mare was sent a prisoner to the castle of Nottingham, and if common rumour may be trusted, would have lost his head, had not Lord Percy intervened.⁵ The next victim of the hatred of mistress and duke was the Bishop of Winchester, who was arraigned before the council on charges⁶ of peculation during his tenure of office, first as treasurer and then as chancellor, found guilty in spite of protestations of innocence, deprived of his temporalities, which were given to Richard of Bordeaux, as a bid for popular favour,⁷ and forbidden to come henceforth within twenty miles of the Court. Lancaster next strove to get rid of the marshal, the Earl of March, by commanding him to go on a foreign mission. The earl, suspecting the manoeuvre as an indirect attempt against his life, refused to obey, and was deprived of his office, which was given to Lord Percy in order to secure the adhesion of this popular magnate, and curry favour with the people. These measures were ominous. If John of Ghent had had an army at his disposal, or could have succeeded in winning popular favour, Richard of Bor-

⁴ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 103-105.

⁵ Ibid., p. 105.

⁶ They are given in detail in the English Chronicle published along with the Chron. Angliæ, Appendix to Introduction, pp. 74-80.

⁷ See the Chron. Angliæ, p. 106, Ut qualem gratiam assequeretur populi. The English Chronicle is strongly against the bishop.

deaux would probably never have mounted the throne. The duke similarly made an attempt to disarm the hostility of the Church by filling the offices of chancellor and treasurer with two prelates—Houghton, Bishop of St David's, and Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester,⁸—thus reversing the anti-clerical policy of 1371.

Having thus struck down the leaders of the opposition, he resolved to summon Parliament in order to obtain supply. He could not trust the nation to endorse his lawless conduct, and took the precaution of getting his own nominees elected in most of the shires and burghs.⁹ This is the first authentic instance of the use of illegal tactics to pack Parliament with subservient members which was to become the regular practice of later times. His manœuvres were so successful that when Parliament met, he could confidently count on browbeating the opposition and carry his purpose of undoing legislatively, as he had already done practically, the work of its predecessor.

The session opened on the 27th January 1377, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, the king's deputy,¹⁰ with a sermon from the Right Rev. Chancellor, which amply shows how skilfully a courtly bishop may whitewash a royal sinner. The bishop canted with an unction that must have threatened the gravity of his auditors. Like the messenger of

⁸ *Fœdera*, iii. 1069; Hook (*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, iv. 255) has antedated their appointment by a year.

⁹ *Chron. Angliæ*, p. 112, *Nam omnes, qui in ultimo parlamento viriliter pro communitate steterant, procuravit pro viribus amoveri, &c.* There were, he adds, only twelve elected members of the previous Parliament returned.

¹⁰ *Fœdera*, iii. 1070.

the Gospel, he brought the good news, which they were probably enough glad to hear, that the king had almost recovered from a serious attack. Which attack, though in reality the result of his excesses, of which the bishop of course knows nothing, was an evidence of the very special love of God towards his majesty, in virtue of the text, "Quos diligo, castigo." Like St Paul, the king had been spared to be a chosen vessel of divine grace. If it were permissible to shake one's head, during the delivery of a courtly sermon, in the supreme Court of Parliament, surely every head must have wagged at this solemn deliverance. The good bishop was, however, left, doubtless with many a mental reservation, to proceed in his demonstration from Scripture and other sources of the virtues of his chosen vessel, and pointed to his royal jubilee and his family of virtuous sons (the Duke of Lancaster in particular, doubtless), as further evidence of the perfections of the sovereign, and the blessing of God upon him. In contemplation of this chosen vessel, let those present strive to merit the same grace and eschew all vice (great inward laughter assuredly !). The head may be sound and full of virtue, but some of the members at the same time be sick. So the king, who is the head of the nation, may be a pattern of virtue, and yet his subjects be given to sin (renewed inward risible shakings!). Needless to say after this, the bishop found a text to enforce the exhortation that it was their Christian duty to pay for the divine blessing of a sovereign who is "the vicar, or legate of God on earth," in other words, to grant a liberal supply. He did not add, to satiate the rapacity of Alice Perrers and her subtle patron the duke.

The sermon¹¹ might be stuck in one of Molière's comedies—Tartuffe say—by way of improvement, but being preached in Parliament with the utmost gravity and earnestness, it is to be regarded as a serious composition by all who believe that lecherous old kings are virtuous men.

Turning to practical business, the Rev. Chancellor found a more mundane argument for a money grant in the threatened invasion of the realm by the French, and their allies, the Spaniards and the Scots, and invited the assembly to deliberate forthwith on this pressing matter. The chamberlain, Sir R. Ashton, followed with an intimation that certain proposals would be laid before Parliament for the purpose of putting an end to the controversy with the Pope—proposals which led to another treaty with Gregory XI., on the 15th February, his Holiness repeating his promise to make circumspect use of the right of provisions, and undertaking to have due regard to that of free election to English Sees.¹² The two Houses then proceeded to business. As before, the Commons asked a committee of the Upper House to be appointed as their assessors. The greater number of the magnates nominated for this purpose were the duke's creatures,¹³ and Sir Thomas Hungerford, the Speaker chosen, was his steward.¹⁴ In such an assembly no obstructive demands for reform, or outspoken denunciations of ministers, were to be expected. After debate on the many expedients suggested for meeting the urgency of the

¹¹ A summary of it is given in Rot. Par., ii. 361-362.

¹² *Fœdera*, iii. 1072.

¹³ Chron. Angliæ, p. 113; cf. Rot. Par., ii. 363-364.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

case, the Commons and their assessors chose that of a poll-tax of fourpence as the least onerous to themselves, and stipulated that two earls and two barons should be appointed guardians of the subsidy thus granted, whose duty it should be to see that the money was expended on the defence of the kingdom and other objects of the war.¹⁵ The work of the Good Parliament was momentarily undone, but the ground gained was not lost, as the growing self-assertion of the Commons in the next reign was to prove.

The craven spirit of the Parliament in making itself the tool of an unscrupulous faction appeared still more glaringly in the petitions¹⁶ which, at the Duke's instigation, the Commons presented for the restoration of Lord Latimer, Alice Perrers, Lyons, and others, whom the Good Parliament had proscribed. There was, indeed, a minority which protested against this disreputable proceeding, and demanded the liberation, or at least the fair trial, of Sir Peter de la Mare, but their representations went unheeded, and their resistance was quelled by threats of violence.¹⁷

While Parliament was deliberating at Westminster, Convocation, which was summoned by Archbishop Sudbury for the 3rd February, was sitting at St Paul's. Convocation, it soon appeared, resented the attack on the Bishop of Winchester, and deeply sympathised with the sufferer. The rights of the clergy, the liberties of the Church, had, they complained, been infringed by the high-handed proceed-

¹⁵ Rot. Par., ii. 364.

¹⁶ Ibid., ii. 372 and 374; cf. Chron. Angliæ, pp. 130-131.

¹⁷ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 112-113.

ings of the duke. Their interests were bound up with those of Wykeham, who found an outspoken and resolute champion in Courtenay, the Bishop of London. He indignantly asked why the archbishop had neglected to summon the Bishop of Winchester to Convocation. Sudbury alleged the royal prohibition which precluded Wykeham from approaching within twenty miles of the Court. Well, then, returned Courtenay, we shall not proceed to business unless the bishop be cited, for Convocation, like Parliament, was asked to grant an aid. This was a strong argument in favour of concession, and ultimately the archbishop consented, and the duke by his silence concurred, that the bishop should be summoned. Wykeham accordingly came attended by a few followers, and was received with special marks of honour.¹⁸ In return for this concession Convocation agreed to pay its full share of the poll-tax.¹⁹

The session of this ecclesiastical assembly was memorable for the attack on John Wicklif, and his stormy defence by the Duke of Lancaster. Strange as it may seem, the religious reformer and the unscrupulous politician were close allies. There was nothing in common between the two men except their opposition to the hierarchy, but this opposition was inspired by widely divergent motives. Wicklif was theologian, social theorist, and practical reformer, and his opposition to the Pope and the hierarchy sprung from the conviction that the Church was unscriptural both in its government and its doctrines. He held firmly the Reformation doctrine that the Scriptures are the only source of authority in both respects, superior to the Pope, superior to tradition.

¹⁸ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 113-114.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 113.

Nay, in his prelections at Oxford, his sermons at Fillingham, Ludgershall, and Lutterworth, and in some of his writings, he had denounced submission to both Pope and tradition, in preference to the Bible, as presumptuous and blasphemous.²⁰ He was more assertive on this point than his countryman and part contemporary, William of Ockham, the bold Franciscan, who told Pope John XXII. some plain facts about his pretensions, and had to flee from Avignon in consequence. Nay, he taught (and this must have been very offensive to these grasping churchmen) that the civil power is supreme in the State, and might even interfere in the affairs of the Church.²¹ The clerical office is not a dominion but a ministry, and the Church is not the clergy but the whole body of believers, not a mere official organisation which possesses a monopoly of divine grace, but a spiritual body in communion with God.²² He was an opponent, too, of the religious sensuousness and superstition of the age,²³ and had lifted his voice and used his pen against the immorality of the clergy. He was an out-and-out reformer of the abuses of which we have already heard bitter complaints, and (what was enough to damn him in the sight of any assembly of wealthy prelates and abbots) he would have begun the work by depriving these rich dignitaries of Convocation of their possessions. Let the Church return to apostolic poverty, is his demand; in other words, let its property be secularised in the interests of religion, not, as the holders

²⁰ For proofs see Lechler, John Wickliffe and his English Pre-cursors, p. 240, *et seq.*

²¹ Lechler, p. 257.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

of fat benefices cried out, in destruction thereof. Still more, it is the duty of the civil power to do so, and cast unworthy priests out of their livings, if their superiors fail to do *their* duty. All this is somewhat visionary, and in the then state of the Church impracticable. The same trait appears in the application of his theology to politics and social questions. As all dominion, whether national or individual, and with it the right of property, is derived from God, transgression involved the forfeiture of a man's possessions as rebellion against his divine lord superior.

Such a creed is strangely out of place in this fourteenth century, with its pampered hierarchy, its gross superstition, its crass sacerdotalism, its corruption and immorality. If ever man was, John Wickliff was in antagonism to his age, and he is certainly, in some respects, the most remarkable man of the century. From such a man, in character, in thought, in moral and spiritual feeling, John of Ghent was as far sundered as the poles. Yet, as often happens, they had some ideas in common, and events then, as in Reformation days, threw reformers and unscrupulous politicians into the same camp. John of Ghent was the aggressive enemy of an over-rich priesthood, an advocate of the encroachment by the State on the autonomy of the Church, and here the high-toned reformer and the crafty and ambitious man of the world were on the same plane. His connection with Wickliff was of long standing, and it is likely enough that he owed his nomination as one of the commissioners at Bruges to the duke's influence. It was unfortunate that the spiritually-minded Wickliff became the *protégé* of such a man; though it is most improbable

that he sympathised with much of the duke's action. In the eye of the Church, at all events, he was identified with the interests of his patron, and that was enough for the duke's clerical opponents to strike at the reformer. Their hostility was inspired as much by political as by theological animosity. To be original, independent, assertive against the abuses by which a large class earned its living, and hugged tradition all the more firmly in consequence, was in such an age a deadly offence. To be in addition, as these resentful dignitaries believed him to be, the duke's tool, was the worst of all heresies. It is easy to see why they should single him out for uncompromising attack. It is likewise easy to understand how a man standing alone at bay before the enormous forces of convention and prejudice, would be only too glad to avail himself of such powerful protection as that of the virtual autocrat of the day.

Archbishop Sudbury, who was suspected of leaning towards the Court, would fain have avoided a struggle, but was compelled by the fiercer spirits on the episcopal bench to summon Wicklif, on the 19th February, to answer for his heresies. The duke at once took up the cudgels in his defence. Not only did he assign him four masters of theology, belonging to the mendicant orders, as his counsel,²⁴ but he himself and the marshal, Lord Henry Percy, with an armed guard, accompanied the accused doctor to St Paul's on the morning of the trial. On arriving at the door, they found the cathedral crowded by a vast congregation. Percy ordered his guards to clear a way to the Lady Chapel, where the bishops, with a large number of magnates, were already convened.

²⁴ Chron. Angliæ, p. 118.

The guards began pushing their way inwards, followed by the duke and the marshal. Bishop Courtenay protested against this rough interference with the rights of his church, for the marshal had, of course, no jurisdiction within the sacred building. In his resentment, the duke angrily retorted that he would be master there in spite of him. When he had forced his way into the chapel in this provocative fashion, Percy directed Wicklif to be seated. "You have need of a soft seat," added he, "for you have many questions to answer." Courtenay again protested with warmth against such arrogant conduct. It behoved the accused to stand in the presence of his judges. A heated wrangle ensued, in which the duke took part. The bishop answered recrimination with recrimination, until Lancaster, purple with rage, swore that he would know how to tame the pride of every bishop in England. "You trust in your family connections," cried he (Courtenay was a son of the Earl of Devonshire), "but your confidence will avail you nothing. Your relatives will have enough to do to save their own skins." "My trust is in God, and not in my family, or in any man," retorted the bishop with spirit. "A little more of this," muttered the duke wrathfully, "and I'll drag you out of the church by the hair of your head." The stinging retort was overheard by some of the congregation, and angry voices were raised in denunciation of this outrage to their bishop. The uproar became so threatening, that Lancaster was forced to retire, carrying Wicklif, who had not uttered a word during this unseemly wrangle, with him. For the present the proceedings against him collapsed, in no creditable fashion certainly. As the

whole affair was largely a matter of political partisanship on both sides, from which he was probably exempt, there was no loss to justice thereby. Nay, the reformer might congratulate himself that he had been saved, for the nonce at least, from the party tactics of his persecutors. If his friends had been guilty of insolent and outrageous conduct, the motives and the impartiality of his accusers were certainly not above question.

The unseemly scene did not end with the sitting in the cathedral. The duke had roused the anger of the citizens of London by the attack on their bishop; he intensified that anger into fury by an attack on their rights and liberties. At his instigation, a petition was presented in Parliament that the city should be deprived of its charters, and that a captain should be appointed to take the place of the mayor, and the marshal invested with the power of arrest. Against this audacious proposal London rose as one man. On the morrow the citizens met to deliberate on defensive measures, and on being informed by Lord Fitzwalter that the marshal had presumed to arrest one of their number, rushed off, arms in hand, to Lord Percy's residence, burst open the door, and, after releasing the prisoner and searching the house from top to bottom, set fire to the stocks. The marshal, happily for himself, was not at home, and the mob, intent on deadly vengeance, hurried in quest of him to Lancaster's residence, the Savoy Palace. It happened that both the duke and the marshal were that day dining with a wealthy merchant, John de Ypres. They were enjoying the oysters of their host, when a loud knocking was heard at the door, and in burst a messenger to warn

them of their danger. They immediately jumped up from the table (the duke injuring his shins in so doing), and hurrying to the river, escaped by boat to Kennington, where the Princess of Wales was residing with her son Richard. Here they were safe, but their partisans were subjected to very rough treatment by the mob, which beat a priest, who indulged in angry recrimination against Sir Peter de la Mare, so unmercifully that he died a few days later, and unhorsed a Scottish knight, Sir Thomas Swinton, who wore the badge of Lancaster, and would have throttled him had not the mayor intervened. Informed of the riot, Courtenay set off for the ducal palace, and arrived just in time to save it from destruction. He besought the angry citizens to remember that it was the sacred season of Lent, and to refrain from disgracing religion by their violence. His hearers at length desisted, but they showed their hatred of the would-be violator of their liberties, by sticking the duke's arms reversed on a pole in the principal street, as a sign that he was a traitor. The intervention of the Princess of Wales failed to calm the storm. The citizens demanded the fair trial of the Bishop of Winchester and Sir Peter de la Mare, and determined to send a deputation to Shene, to complain to the king himself of the conduct of their opponents, and to disclaim all sympathy with the riotous excesses of the mob. Lancaster's attempt to prevent the audience was unsuccessful, and the king reassured them on the score of their chartered rights. At a subsequent audience, however, to which he summoned the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, he reprimanded them, through the chamberlain, Sir Robert Ashton, for the

indignities put upon his son, and demanded the deposition of the city officials.²⁵ With this demand the citizens complied, and the new mayor and corporation hastened to mollify the duke, by entreating the bishops to excommunicate the authors of certain lampoons against him, and going in procession to St Paul's, carrying a taper bearing his arms, which they solemnly burned before the image of the Virgin. The quarrel was finally hushed up by the reversal²⁶ of the proceedings against the Bishop of Winchester, who effectively bribed the royal mistress to intercede for him with the king, in spite of the opposition of the duke. In view of this dishonourable transaction, the friends of Wicklif might be excused for thinking that the absence of principle was not all on their side.²⁷

The settlement of this bitter quarrel was the last important business in which the decrepit king took part. A few months before he had celebrated his second golden jubilee—that of his reign—and in another few months that long reign was to close in circumstances of the deepest melancholy. The fact that his infatuation for Alice Perrers continued to the end did not tend to lend dignity or propriety to his last days. The hero of so many martial enterprises died the bedridden slave of an infamous adventuress. It was a sorry ending of a career, which, however censurable in some respects, was

²⁵ See Chron. Angliæ, Introduction, p. 69. There is a full account of these events in this Chronicle, pp. 115-137.

²⁶ The act of restitution of his temporalities is dated 18th June 1377 (*Fœdera*, iii. 1079).

²⁷ I see no reason for doubting the chronicler's story, in view of the fact that the bishop is one of his heroes, and he would not be likely to invent or report any slander to his discredit.

at all events manly and heroic for the most part. Premature senility, voluptuous dotage, are facts that history would fain have been spared the pain of recording, as the last act in the drama of so stirring a life. At Shene, during these last three months of moribund royal existence, there was no heroism ; there was not even respectability to relieve the melancholy collapse—moral as well as physical—of the dying warrior king. According to the monkish chronicler,²⁸ he did not evince any interest, till towards the very end, in the salvation of his soul. The talk at the royal bedside was all about hunting and hawking, about any “trifle” that would stave off the thought of death and religion, and protract to the utmost the regime of the self-seeking favourite, who neglected no opportunity to feather her nest in case of emergency. When that emergency approached, and the thought of death could no longer be talked out of the royal sick-room by frivolous chatter, mistress and courtiers took themselves off, and left their miserable lord to meet the last enemy as best he might, the shameless Alice taking with her, if the chronicler speak truly, the very rings from the king's fingers! Edward was left with a single priest to keep him company in that dread hour of inevitable dissolution. The faithful presbyter mingled admonition with consolation. In the presence of death the comedy of priestly flattery as acted by his lordship of St David's was out of place, and even a king must be told the plain truth. “You have grievously sinned against God, and have need to ask his mercy,” said the honest priest. From the sick-bed came the plaintive prayer, “Jesu miserere.” These were the last audible

²⁸ Chron. Angliæ, p. 142.

words of Edward III., for with the brief supplication that broke the silence of the deserted chamber, the power of speech left him for ever in this world. The good priest nevertheless persisted in the urgent work of his salvation, and asked him to raise his eyes to heaven in token of the effort to make his full peace with God. "You have not only transgressed the laws of God," continued he, "you have broken the laws of the land. You have been unfaithful to your coronation oath, and have neglected to do justice to your subjects." The eyes of the dying man looked languidly upwards. "Do you sincerely forgive your enemies?" next asked the priest. Edward extended his hand in token of compliance. Whereupon the holy man presented the cross, and exhorted him to look to the death of the Redeemer for the remission of his sins. Edward fervently pressed it to his lips, and thus clinging to the emblem of Christian hope, breathed his last.²⁹ A few days later (21st June 1377), the grave closed over his remains in Westminster Abbey.

²⁹ Chron. Angliæ, pp. 142-146 ; cf. Walsingham, i. 326-327.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD AND HIS AGE.

"De mortuis nihil nisi bonum."

THE historian is precluded by the interests of truth from literally observing this charitable maxim, however much he may wish to speak well of the dead. He can at all events strive to be judicial in his estimate of a character, and the dead may not expect anything more or less. It will be evident to the reader, by this time, that the writer has been unable to sympathise with much of Edward's action, whether as politician or as ruler. In these pages he has hitherto come hardly at all under our notice as man. The reason is that in official documents it is the ruler, not the man, that obtrudes on our attention. Even from the chroniclers we obtain few hints of his personality beyond the conventional panegyric of royalty which he shares with most of his crowned contemporaries. Froissart and the rest of them distil these conventional flatteries as occasion offers, but for Froissart and most of his superficial fellow-chroniclers in this fighting age, martial prowess covers a multitude of sins, and we have sought in vain for an incisive, balanced estimate of the personality and character of their hero. Walsingham, indeed, devotes a page to the subject, and as it is entirely favourable to the dead king, it shall

have the honour of repetition, even if it excites reservations here and there. The portrait refers to the period antecedent to the death of Queen Philippa, before, that is, the moral and physical collapse of the last eight years of his life. Edward, he tells us, was of imposing stature, and the elegance of his figure, the distinction of his handsome features, made an indelible impression on the beholder. "Edwardus Gratosus" is the epithet by which contemporaries expressed their sense of the distinguished and seductive charm of his bearing, in which he bore the palm over all his predecessors. His magnanimity, his gentleness, his affability, heightened the fascination of his person and his manner. He was generous to a fault, and happily his generosity was not always unworthily bestowed, though it easily degenerated into the vices of extravagance and prodigality. We may well believe the next assertion, that he only showed himself the master to kings and princes, but was without a trace of haughtiness towards his inferiors in rank—always an indication of a certain goodness of heart. His courtesy and familiarity, within the circle of his brothers-in-arms at least, were proverbial, though we do not hear of any instance of that intimate sympathy with the humbler classes which tradition would surely not have failed to emphasise in popular tales like those which have enshrined the name of Henry IV. of France in the remembrance of the French people. In his ambition, his magnificence, his extravagance, his amorousness, and unfortunately in the disasters which ultimately discredited a mistaken foreign policy, he seems to me to bear a striking resemblance to another French potentate, Henry's grandson, Louis XIV. His fame

as a warrior king dazzled the world of his day, and formed the subject of admiring story even among remote and barbarous nations. His love of the chase amounted to a passion, his love of architecture left its trace in the splendid buildings which he finished or began. In all this we have no reason to differ from the kindly chronicler, especially as he condemns the excesses of his later years, and laments the infatuation and the misfortunes which tended to diminish his fame. But when he proceeds to exalt him as the ideal ruler, who wielded the sceptre with a single eye to the weal of the people, provident in the work of government and discerning in council, discrepancy begins to assert itself, and we take leave of our portraitist with the impression that his scrutiny of his subject was after all but skin deep.¹

Few kings have been so energetic, so given to enterprise. For forty years—from 1330, when he took the government into his own hands, to 1370, when his failing health began to incapacitate him for action—his life was one of incessant labour. To him the kingship was certainly no sinecure, and his intensity, his industry, were in many ways admirable. He was one of those potentates who lend an impulse to their age, so much so that he is the central figure, the motive force of his age. This fact alone entitles him to be regarded as an altogether extraordinary, exceptional sort of man. To shape the history of

¹ Walsingham, pp. 327-328; cf. Froissart (Luce), viii. 230-231, who is of course dazzled by the glamour of chivalry. In his opinion there had not been so distinguished a king on the throne since the days of King Arthur. Neither Knighton nor Eulogium attempts a portrait.

one's time (if only the political history), whether for good or evil, is an evidence of a certain originality, of an incontestable force of character. There is an electric force in this man, which, even if it spent itself in one long drama of violent action, is indicative of potency of mind and will, and lifts him far above royal mediocrity. His was a mind capable of conceiving vast schemes, united with that sanguine, eager temperament, which will not rest short of their accomplishment. He has, too, great imaginative power, especially of the heroic caste, and is the incarnation of that spirit of chivalry which thirsts for martial glory, and is impatient of the monotony of a prosaic and purely practical life. The romance of warlike adventure appeals to the strongest passion of his nature, and throws a certain glamour of poetic sublimity over his history. It is this that has fascinated the chroniclers, and if we could regard it as the *summum bonum* in a king, we should, like them, yield ourselves to an uncritical enthusiasm. But while there is much of this kind of thing in his history to appeal to the poetic instinct, there is much to excite the disapprobation of the non-impressionable critic. If the main business of a king is to rule for the weal of the people, Edward, we must conclude, did not understand his business, was in fact to a large extent a failure on the throne. The imagination that can conceive large schemes is no doubt a useful quality in a king, and may lead to beneficial results. The true king, the great ruler, must have imagination. He must feel the widest sympathy with all classes of men, more especially with the largest class of all—the humble man of the people—and this sympathy he cannot have without the

imaginative faculty of realising and identifying himself with the widest diversity of interests, aspirations, characters. But prosaic, practical sense is, in most cases, more imperative, and far more valuable in the ruler than all the heroics of Homer, especially if these heroics tend to make him mistake the will-o'-the-wisps of his ambition for the behests of duty, to neglect true statesmanship for mistaken and selfish ends. Herein consists, to my mind, the grand error of the life of Edward III. He allowed his ambition rather than his duty to direct him, and like all potentates who have permitted themselves to be led away by their temperament and their personal proclivities, he proved in the long run, from the standpoint of results, to be a failure. His determination to conquer both Scotland and France was so fatuous that only a man of his sanguine, imaginative temperament and ill-regulated ambition could have conceived or attempted it. It is indeed possible to see a far-seeing statesmanship in this policy. It was evident, of course, that the union of the Scottish and English crowns, under his auspices, would be an enormous gain for England by depriving France of a most dangerous ally. It was no less evident that the union of France and England under the same auspices would benefit English trade, and establish the supremacy of English power over Europe. One might, of course, go further, and argue that it would have been greatly to the advantage of English interests if Spain, Italy, Germany, all Europe, nay, all the world, could have been ruled from Westminster. Whether it was practical or advisable was another matter. But I am by no means sure that patriotic and not personal considerations formed the

motive power of his action towards both Scotland and France, and I have not the slightest doubt that a sober-minded statesman, who had an eye to the practical interests of his country, would have declared both schemes of union to be, in the circumstances of the age, a *fata morgana*. I do not say that the sober-minded, practical statesman would have shrunk from the experiment, if force could have achieved this end. In this age, as in every age, force is the supreme arbiter, if justice is too weak to vindicate its rights; but the thing was clearly impossible, in view of England's past experience of both Scottish and French conquest, and of its limited powers of aggression against France, which was by far the more powerful kingdom, not to speak of France and Scotland combined. It ought to have been obvious to Edward that he could not permanently succeed in this large scheme of conquest, though he might work fearful havoc to both kingdoms, and impoverish England into the bargain. It ought to have been equally obvious that Scotland and France had as good a right to national independence as England, and that he had no right, moral or historical, to force them into a hybrid union which would have effaced that independence.

To renew the struggle with Scotland might be alluring; it was not very hopeful, and Edward would have been a wise man and a better king had he accepted the inevitable, as a matter of political expediency, if from no higher motive, and honourably abode by the treaty of Northampton. That he did not do so in the face of past experience proves that he was the votary of a reckless ambition, which was uncontrolled by considerations of humanity or prac-

tical wisdom. It may be said that he inherited this policy, and the opportunity seemed favourable, but a more self-restrained, practical man would have read the lessons of recent history differently, and would have calculated the risks in a more sober spirit. The hankering after martial distinction and personal prestige was the ruling motive for which Scotland had to be harried into a desert, and to make trial of its endurance in vindicating its independence once more in spite of its defeats.

His attitude towards France is suggestive of still more egregious conceit and folly. True, he undoubtedly regarded himself as the rightful claimant to the French crown, and felt all the soreness of a rejected candidate who was unjustly refused his rights. But though the provocation to aggression was, from his point of view, great, a wise man would have measured his strength in its true proportions, and submitted to deny himself the pleasure of waging war for what could only be a mere idea. The love of warlike enterprise, added to the sense of resentment, led him along the fatal path of victory, which sooner or later could only be the path of defeat. To imagine that France and England could subsist under an united crown was to fly in the face of history even more flagrantly than in the case of Scotland. The French possessions of the English kings had been a thorn in the side of the English people, and had led to friction and bloodshed for centuries. The probability was that Edward could only win France to lose it, and lose it at tremendous cost. This conviction would seem to have taken hold of the people, if not of the king, for the people soon grew impatient of the war, in spite of repeated

victories, and was from the beginning suspicious of a combination, which would have made either France subordinate to England, or England subordinate to France. Had Edward consulted the feeling of the nation, which, even under a headstrong king, is apt to keep the demands of practical statesmanship in view, there would have been no Hundred Years' War, and no waste of blood and treasure for the highly problematic policy of French conquest. There might have been a campaign or two, but that would have exhausted (as indeed it did exhaust) the national craving for war. True, Philip coveted Guienne, and afforded ground for quarrel, outside the question of the succession. But Edward might have thrashed Philip (which he showed that he could certainly do), without coveting in return Philip's crown, and forced him to live in neighbourly fashion.

I shall say little of the excesses of this barbarous warfare as an argument in condemnation of it. I have said enough as occasion arose of the brutal and selfish spirit that animated it, and the aimless calamities to which it led. There was absolutely no great end to be served by it and its diabolic effects, and if it be said by way of palliation that war was the *raison d'être* and the pastime of chivalry, then chivalry, say I, was one of the most lamentable delusions that ever cursed the human race, and affords no justification for the conduct of men who must be presumed to have been intelligent, and have had some sense of moral verities, and who ought therefore to have realised their responsibility as leaders of their age. Chivalry may be a very, very beautiful thing in the rosy colours of the romantic writer, who would fain wean the modern

world back to mediævalism, and our picturesque Froissart is full of the ideal of the fighting cavalier, who lives to knock down some other cavalier or be himself knocked down, and thereafter go to heaven or hell, as the case may be. But even in the light of our good chronicler's fond panegyric of this age of picturesque fighting maniacs, the thing appears as a childish vagary, and when we look at it in the bloody realistic picture of battle, plunder, outrage, unspeakable misery, it comes out in its true colours as a hideous, disgusting madness. Don Quixote in the flesh is a deluded and heartless snob for the most part, who will carry murder and rapine among the people, and talk of his Donna Dulcinea in raptures of heroic verse, and trample on the rights of defenceless peasants, and delude himself with his notions of "honour" and "glory" into the belief that he is a right honourable man, and a gentleman! Such is the fond image of the romantic writer, which very soon flits away into the realm of poetry when we get on the track of one of Edward's expeditions! Nay, it has fixed itself on the retina of writers of solid knowledge and real insight! "In the wars of Edward III.," says Hallam, "originating in no real animosity, the spirit of honourable as well as courteous behaviour towards the foe, seemed to have arrived at its highest point"²!!! There was, indeed, a certain veneer of romance and knightly punctilio about it, but in treading these wasted fields, and burned villages and towns of France and Scotland, with starving men, women, and children glaring their unspeakable misery from woods, and caves, and earth-dwellings, and crying their curse on man's inhu-

² Middle Ages, iii. 401.

manity to man, I have come to be of a different opinion, and take the liberty of dissenting from Mr Hallam, not to speak of the maudlin romancers who she dtears over the paradise lost of fourteenth-century chivalry.

I shall only add, in reference more particularly to Edward's part in this barbarous business of war, that kings who eschew the sword and devote themselves by predilection to the nobler task of government, may be forced by national considerations to become great warriors. The public weal in the shape of the defence of national independence, or the vindication of some great principle of public utility, may make war a necessity or even a blessing, though, God knows, the evils are terrible enough even in such a contingency. But the ruling motive of this war was assuredly not of this elevating character. It is a wild speculation of reckless ambition which would be deterred by none of those higher arguments that appeal to the heart and conscience. Throughout it all we are repelled not only by its heartless brutality, but by the sordid motives that actuate it. Would-be conquerors of the stamp of an Edward are impervious to considerations of humanity or morality. Let Edward conquer, even if the world perish! But apart from moral and humane considerations, it really is marvellous that it did not occur to the aggressor that devastation was a questionable path to a people's love and submission. Without prejudice, I think I may conclude, from a calm view of ends and results, that in this matter of external statesmanship, Edward is without balance, without true insight, without morality, without real grandeur, and his reign is that of a man who ex-

hausted his country in the pursuit of selfish, and therefore essentially unpatriotic objects.

Nor is Edward our ideal king in regard to his internal regime. Not that he was devoid of some of the good qualities of an administrator and a legislator. He did not seek to play the despot over the nation. He observed the letter of the constitution tolerably faithfully, though he would fain have ruled in virtue of his prerogative, and when he infringed it, it was under the plea of State necessity, or of the vindication of the law. After Edward I., there really was no chance of ignoring the acquired rights of Englishmen, and if he had desired to do so, his long wars made it impolitic, nay, impossible, for him to be on hostile terms with the nation. It cannot be doubted that he worked hard, and meant well, in his efforts to increase the prosperity of the country. He encouraged manufactures, and held out inducements to Flemish artisans to settle in England, in spite of the obloquy of the experiment. He was patron of the wool trade, and strove to forge a commercial as well as a political union with Flanders. He encouraged, too, free trade with Scotland, after he had learned the lesson of the futility of harrying and impoverishing the Scots. It is unquestionable that English commerce with the Low Countries, the Baltic, the Atlantic seaports, and even with the Mediterranean, made considerable steps in advance, and the naval power of England rose to a position of proud supremacy as the results of the victories of Sluys and Winchelsea. He sought to find new markets and new channels for trade, and to strike off some of the mediæval fetters that hampered the commercial intercourse of nations and the

development of free industry. Some of his experiments were failures, doubtless, such as the attempt to regulate prices by artificial legislation, and the privileges conferred on certain wealthy traders in return for grants and presents to the king were injurious to the general interest. That trade prospered is, however, evident from the growth of a wealthy merchant class, which was beginning to exert an influence on politics, and was distinguished by royalty with many marks of favour. The story has often been repeated of a London merchant entertaining five kings at his city residence in 1364, and the story is significant of the influence of wealth and commerce, apart from mere rank, in an age when the caste feeling was exceedingly strong. He gave some encouragement to education by founding King's Hall at Cambridge (subsequently incorporated with Trinity College), and his political interest in Scotland led him to patronise the Scottish youth who wished to increase their scanty stores of knowledge at the English Universities, or extend their travels to the Continent. He was the patron of Chaucer, or at least gave him a post at Court and in the customs,³ and employed him on foreign missions. His devotion to building was in keeping with the trend of the age, which, however given to the barbarous pastime of war, has left grand monuments of its love of the noble art of formulating thought and feeling in stone.

We could wish that there were no reverse side of this picture, yet we greatly fear that the reverse

³ See *Foedera*, iii. 1004 (8th June 1374), where Geoffrey Chaucer is appointed comptroller of the customs and the wool subsidy in London.

is *the* picture. First and foremost, he subordinated far too much the work of administration to the favourite part of the man-at-arms. It would be going too far to say, as some have done, that he regarded his country solely as a tool of his ambitious schemes of conquest, but he certainly did so in far too large a degree. There must have been something radically wrong in the regal conceptions of a monarch who loaded himself with debt and extorted from an unwilling people, in spite of reiterated expostulations, enormous sums for the maintenance of a war undertaken mainly from motives of ambition, and tending merely to the profit and fame of a comparatively small following of war lords. Throughout the greater part of his reign we have the impression, derived, not from prejudice, but from a study of the Rolls of Parliament, that there is a deeply rooted if not always outspoken antagonism between king and people on this point. In this sense Edward made war not only on his enemies, but on his people. It may be that he was the paragon of all the excellences which the chroniclers ascribe to him, and that John Bull in the fourteenth century was an ungrateful and incorrigible grumbler. In the face of this national dissatisfaction, and this latent irritation and soreness, this oft-repeated complaint of bad government, corruption, and unfair dealing, this want of sympathy and harmony between governor and governed, I do not believe that Edward was blameless, and that Englishmen were fractious, contentious, wrong-headed, and disloyal. On the contrary, their patience, their long-suffering, under the strain of this mad and endless war, which threatened to ruin them, for no more definite purpose than that of the aggran-

disement of a bellicose king, is marvellous. Had John Bull resolutely brought down his fist, as he several times threatened to do, and refused to pay another penny into the royal treasury, after the first two years of aimless campaigning, he would have been acting both a reasonable and a patriotic part. That he did not do so, shows great indulgence towards royalty, an indulgence which we cannot imagine him exemplifying in any of the ordinary relations of life. Thus Edward went on year after year bleeding his countrymen to death, and nurturing that feeling of the burden of royalty which sees in the king a taskmaster instead of the servant and friend of the people. In spite of the superficial encomiums of the chroniclers, it is certain that Edward came to be widely unpopular. Parliament evidently mistrusted him, though Parliament when speaking officially is often submissive and always studiously courteous. It had but too good reason to do so. Though he did not attempt seriously to browbeat public opinion, nay, appeared with skilful craft to defer to it, he was by no means scrupulous in keeping his word. His main task as legislator—under stress of the necessities of his rôle as warrior, no doubt—is the evasion of his obligations and promises. How to tide over a passing crisis with as little concession to parliamentary demands as possible, or with an appearance of goodwill without the earnest purpose of complying with just demands—this is the keynote of the statesmanship of fifty years.

Nor does it accord well with the much-trumpeted glory of the reign to find a deeply-rooted distrust of the royal ministers and other officials of administra-

tion all through it. It is not fair to hold Edward responsible for all the abuses of his reign (the Black Death was undoubtedly the cause of much of the misery, which no king could have frustrated), and he invariably professes his eager desire that justice should be done. But this profession is lamed by the steady opposition to the demand for inquiry into the doings of corrupt ministers, and to the growing determination to make them responsible to Parliament for the performance of their duty. And that the demand for redress of intolerable evils should be repeated from session to session without effective steps being taken to deal with the evils complained of, is significant of systematic maladministration or neglect. Certain it is that lawlessness abounded among all classes, and that all shared in the dislike of Court and Government. It is a strange commentary on the panegyrics of the chroniclers, for instance, to find that the people at large regarded with dismay the prospect of a royal progress in their midst. The demoralisation of the age will to some extent account for the prevalent feeling of want of rectitude and true honour in the State, but the strong personality of a virtuous king can make its own moral atmosphere, and exert an incredible influence for good, even if the materials he has to work with are none of the best. The master mind, the noble soul is after all the measure of his age, on the throne at least. For this mastery, this nobility, betokening the truly great man, we look in vain in Edward III.

Yet the age of Edward, if not Edward himself, was in some respects great, if only in its promise of future greatness. Eminently noteworthy is the growth of the power of Parliament, in continuation

of the struggles of earlier ages—presage of the full vindication of the rights of the people as against the assumptions of the Crown. That no taxes should be raised without its sanction, that legislation and even administration should be subject to its control, that it should exercise the right of inquiry and impeachment in the interest of the nation, are principles which were clearly enunciated by the legislature and ultimately admitted by the king. The Commons, in fact, already came into prominence as the dominant legislative force in the State. They not only grant subsidies for the prosecution of the war; Edward constantly consults them, doubtless with a view to an aid, on the progress of his relations with Scotland and France. They take cognisance of all abuses, and are not slow to din the grievances of the nation into royal ears. Edward's foreign policy, however mistaken as a policy, however injurious to England as well as to other countries, was beneficial to the growth of parliamentary power. He could not move a step without consulting Parliament, because he could not fight without grants of money. That he did not venture to dispense with parliamentary sanction is of itself a striking evidence that Parliament was virtually the supreme tribunal to which even the king must appeal. Of course Parliament was as yet far from realising and exercising its inherent powers in checking the personal aims of the monarch, and subordinating them to purely national considerations, but it had at least (and that not merely *pro forma*) to be reckoned with. Edward's ambition was, we may say, the greatest enemy of his prerogative. He sold it for a high price, indeed; but in submitting to excessive taxa-

tion, the Lords and Commons were in reality getting the best of the bargain in the recognition of the principles of liberty and legality.

When we turn from the Parliament to the nation, there is indeed much to depress, and little to presage the high destiny of the people in power and prosperity. The people is in a state bordering on slavery. Its lot is very wretched and unworthy from the standpoint of our own time. Superstition, poverty, oppression, injustice, are omnipresent. The world is a chaos of misery and anarchy, corrupt to the core, at least so say the prophets of the time, and there is evidence enough in its records to prove that they were not indulging in mere fanatic ravings. War, pestilence, famine, succeed in grim procession (and the procession is, alas, oft renewed), and turn the world into a hell of misery. There is little in this gloomy picture to suggest the origin of a better state of things. The world is about to sink into the abyss amid the judgments of an angry God on the sins of men. It is the reign of Antichrist—Antichrist in the State and in the Church. So it appears to an affrighted generation of miserable mortals. In this foredoomed world, the peasantry, which has so large a part of the suffering, is of no more account than a beast of burden, and the beast of burden must be held to the yoke by Statutes of Labourers and other devices of class selfishness. The mass of the nation is thus to be the slave of privilege, wealth, luxury, caste, and may otherwise die of hardship, and go to perdition, for all the world cares. Nevertheless, it is clear that the mass of the nation is beginning to realise that it, too, has interests and rights, and that God never meant, and man had no

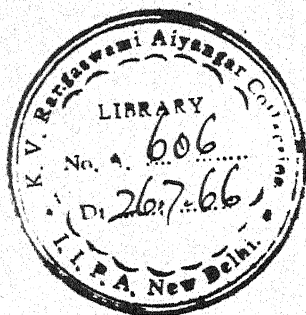
right to make, a human creature the victim of a selfish and brutal tyranny. The peasant, too, is every inch a man, and in goodness a superior man to any king, noble, bishop, or other plutocrat of them all. So, at least, the moralist of the age assures us. It is in Piers Plowman, in fact, in whom he finds the hope of salvation for a godless, anti-Christian, suffering world. It is in him that he places the sense of right, the will to do well, the desire to be guided by conscience and reason, the striving for improvement, the hope of better things, while he lashes the debased, worldly priests and monks, and the oppressive, luxurious, degenerate higher classes of society. That the wretched but honest and industrious peasant is, after all, a person of some importance, is a strong conviction in the heart of our dreamer among the Malvern Hills, himself a monk and a friend of the unsophisticated and well-meaning rustic. Certain it is that there are forces at work (as has been already evident in France, and is about to be evident in England), even in the face of a heartless conventionalism, which will assert themselves in a determined, if despairing, attempt at revolution on behalf of justice and right. Every highway in England was being trod by earnest-minded men, who preached righteousness by the way, in the midst of corruption and iniquity, who denounced the pride and selfishness of the higher orders, and demanded that the State, the Church, society should do justice to the poor man. Conscience and reason were not altogether muffled by the mass of privilege and injustice which was threatening to crush the life out of the body politic. And in this democratic spirit, which is beginning to feel its potency, there is an

earnest of future amendment, of the reign of liberty, humanity, justice for all, though the path to its realisation was to be a long and weary one.

There are portents, too, of that religious and intellectual upheaval, which was to emancipate mind and conscience from the thralldom of mediæval superstition and ignorance. We have already met, in Wicklif, the type of the doctrinal and practical reformer of Reformation times, and we do not read far in the Chronicles before we find instances enough to show that heretics were by no means rare in the fourteenth century, even before Wicklif's time. There were already independent and earnest-minded Christians to shock the orthodoxy of the age with their speculations or their aggressive piety. The Pope's authority already hung as by a thread whenever it threatened to come into collision with national aspiration, and the world was growing ripe for the onslaught against the pretensions of Avignon or Rome. Satire was busy doing its part in the great work of religious progress. Political animosities were aiding in the same direction. Most potent of all, corruption was slowly but surely eating into the vitals of that overgrowth of papal and priestly despotism which seemed so firmly rooted in tradition.

In the England of Edward there is little trace of that revival of learning and that many-sided intellectual activity which is already beginning to assert its power south of the Alps. Though scholasticism is on the wane, the spirit of the Renaissance is only apparent in germ in France and England. There is some study of the Latin classics, of course, as is apparent even from a casual perusal of the chroniclers, who occasionally indulge in a quotation

from Horace or Virgil, but the inspiration to the study of Greek has yet to come from the academies of Florence and other Italian cities. England has no Petrarch, though she has a Chaucer, in whom we find the earnest of the great vernacular literature of the future. Among the bishops, however, are some men of scholarly tastes, notably Richard de Bury, the enlightened book-collector, and some generous patrons of education, like William Wykeham, the founder of a grammar school at Winchester.



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